

The Daily Tar Heel

Volume 119, Issue 43

dailytarheel.com

Thursday, May 19, 2011

UNC leading AIDS research

University researchers could receive millions for eradication work.

By Andy Thomason
Summer Editor

Dr. Myron Cohen told Dr. David Margolis in 2005 that he wanted to create a center charged with curing AIDS.

Margolis, then an associate professor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, was intrigued, and agreed to join the University faculty with that mission in mind.

Almost five years later, a recently-released study led by Cohen — director of the UNC Institute for Global Health and Infectious Diseases — has been hailed as a landmark finding with heavy implications for slowing the global spread of AIDS.

Meanwhile, Margolis and two other UNC researchers might next week become beneficiaries of a federal investment of about \$5 million per year aimed at eradicating the disease.

The developments are representative of the University's prominence in the AIDS research community, as well as the transition of emphasis in the field from prevention to finding a cure for the virus.

"A year ago, somebody would have been embarrassed to say the word 'cure' in public," Margolis said. "Now, things are different."

Ninety-six percent success

Cohen's study, made up of 1,763 heterosexual couples, has demonstrated the importance of early drug treatment to inhibit the transmission of HIV.

Of the 28 individuals who were infected by his or her partner in the course of the study, only one had received early antiretroviral treatment.

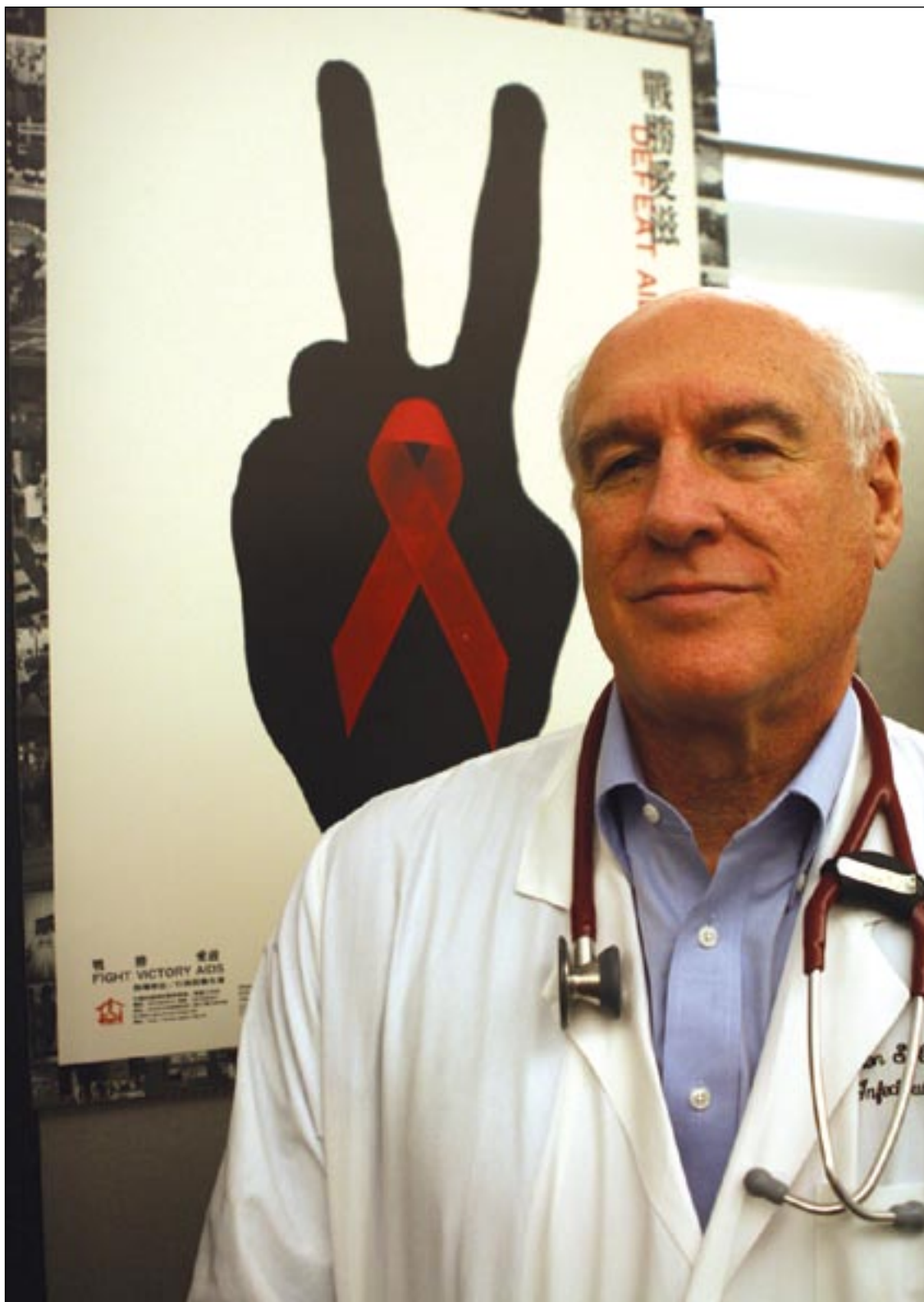
That constitutes a 96 percent success rate — a number that caught the attention of national and international news outlets as well as other researchers.

"I was pretty excited," said Ronald Swanstrom,

SEE AIDS, PAGE 5

INSIDE COHEN'S STUDY

- 1,763 couples from nine different countries participated in the study.
- The research was supposed to end in 2015, but the data and safety monitoring board decided the results were clear enough for immediate release.
- The group required a quantity of drugs valued at more than \$25 million.
- Leaders of the study will continue monitoring participants for at least one more year.



Dr. Myron Cohen stands in front of a poster that hangs in his office building. Cohen led a study that has been hailed as strong evidence for the importance of early antiretroviral treatment in preventing the spread of AIDS.

DTH/ERIN HULL

Student cleared of meth charges

Mephedrone is legal in N.C., but Potts could face federal issues.

By Victoria Stilwell
Senior Writer

Although his charges have been dropped, UNC student Christopher Potts is still reeling from the consequences of being falsely accused of possessing methamphetamine.

He failed the latest semester of classes because he missed his exams and was nearly kicked out of the University.

He lost his job at the local Bank of America parking deck.

He spent three weeks in the Orange County Jail, even though the drug he was in possession of — mephedrone — is legal in North Carolina.

But that won't be the case for much longer.

"There was a lot of guns being pointed at me, and I was kind of mad," Potts said. "The package should have had a data sheet in it that said what it was."

Mephedrone, also known by the slang term "meow-meow," is a synthetic stimulant that produces effects similar to methamphetamine or cocaine.

Effective June 1, mephedrone and other synthetic drugs including fake forms of marijuana will become illegal in the state.

Potts and his housemate Alexander Joustra were arrested April 18 by Chapel Hill police after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials intercepted mephedrone the men ordered from Tanzania.

A Chapel Hill police officer posed as a FedEx delivery person, and Potts and Joustra were arrested after they retrieved the package.

The men were charged with trafficking methamphetamine and possession with intent to sell and distribute the drug.

Lt. Jabe Hunter, who works in the Chapel Hill Police Department narcotics division, wrote in an email that a false field test led officers to mistake the mephedrone for a kilogram of methamphetamine.

"After the delivery and arrest, we got a better look at the substance and had our suspicions on what the substance might be based on its appearance," Hunter wrote.

Potts and Joustra were released from jail May 9 after rushed state lab results revealed the substance's identity.

"One morning they came and got me and said charges was dismissed," Potts said. "They wrote me a check for the money I came in with, and they sent me out the door."

Hunter said even though mephedrone is legal in the state, it is a schedule I controlled substance under federal law.

Because of this, immigration

SEE METH, PAGE 5



Christopher Potts was falsely accused of possessing methamphetamine and spent three weeks in jail.

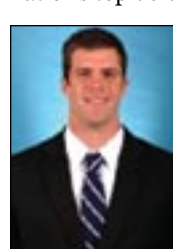
Two worlds, one game

A UNC senior traveled to Uganda to spread lacrosse and charity.

By Kelly Parsons
Sports Editor

On paper, Ryan Flanagan had it all.

During his junior year, the North Carolina lacrosse player was the co-winner of the Schmeisser Memorial Cup as the nation's top defender.



Ryan Flanagan, a UNC lacrosse player, traveled to Uganda and worked with Fields of Growth International.

A business administration major and three-time dean's list honoree, Flanagan had interned with Nike and Bank of America.

But behind his successful facade, the lacrosse star was battling depression.

And in the fall of 2010, Flanagan decided he just needed to get away.

The rising senior was a semester ahead in school and had little holding him back.

"Aside from lacrosse, there was no real reason for me to be



COURTESY OF KEVIN DUGAN

During his two-month trip to Uganda, Flanagan helped develop the village of Kkindu and taught native children how to play lacrosse.

back here," Flanagan said. "It was either come back and just hang out and get drunk or go do something else."

In August 2010, while students returned to Chapel Hill, Flanagan packed his bags and flew to the east African country of Uganda.

For two months, he worked with the organization Fields of Growth International, helping to develop the impoverished nation and connect with its people through the sport of lacrosse.

Flanagan is now one of 10

finalists for the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award — a distinction that honors athletes who have made significant contributions in their communities and showcased success both in the classroom and on the field.

Through his charitable work and athletic prestige, Flanagan has left a mark on his surroundings. But more than 7,000 miles away lies the village of Kkindu — a place where an impromptu visit

SEE FLANAGAN, PAGE 5

Proposed budget would keep benefits

Town wants to preserve core services to retain workers.

By Chelsey Dulaney
Staff Writer

In what has been described as one of the tightest fiscal years in a decade, Chapel Hill is considering a budget that does not include a tax increase or full-time employee layoffs.

Town Manager Roger Stancil presented a potential 2011-2012 budget to the Chapel Hill Town Council last week that aims to preserve employee benefits, continue the town's partnership with UNC Health Care and focus resources on core services and staff retention.

The proposed budget of \$50.5 million includes only one new goal: to fund an updated comprehensive plan.

In creating the budget, Stancil said the town faced challenges, including the state budget crisis, increasing health care costs and slow economic recovery.

Ken Pennoyer, business management director for the town, said it is still uncertain how the state budget crisis will affect the town's fiscal policies.

BY THE NUMBERS

4 percent

Spending cut from 2010-11

\$250,000

Comprehensive plan budget

\$75,000

Ombuds program budget

\$512,700

Planned capital expenditures

He said the state has made minimal cuts to town funding, but the largest repercussion will likely come from cuts to UNC.

"So much of our local people and enterprises are wrapped around the University," he said. "It could have an indirect impact on the town economy."

With these state cuts, Pennoyer said the town's goals were hard to fit into the tight budget.

"We didn't want to balance the budget on the back of our full-time employees, and we didn't want to nickel and dime employee benefits," he said.

To counteract funding short-

SEE TOWN BUDGET, PAGE 5

Inside

BETTER MARKET

Fewer graduates planned on enrolling in graduate school this year, according to University Career Services. **Page 3.**



HIGH PRAISE

A Chapel Hill High School club was granted a \$1,000 award for its work promoting environmental awareness. **Page 4.**

FUNDING SWITCH

A last-minute amendment to the N.C. House of Representatives budget would cut nearly \$10 million from financial aid for UNC-system schools and direct it to funding for K-12 public schools. **Page 6.**

This day in history

MAY 19, 1995

Joseph Carlyle Sitterson died in Chapel Hill. Sitterson was chancellor from 1966 to 1972, one of the University's most turbulent periods.

Today's weather



Sunny sides around **H 79, L 57**

Friday's weather



You'll miss the rain, kid **H 81, L 59**

“Longing, we say, because desire is full of endless distances.”

ROBERT HASS, "MEDITATION AT LAGUNITAS"