

CAMPUS BRIEFS

Sixty UNC physicians named to 'America's top doctors'

After a vote conducted by their peers, 60 physicians from UNC were named to a list of "America's top doctors" on Friday by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd.

Medical oncology representatives led the way with eight selections. In all, 27 different fields have physicians included in the list, which was compiled by asking respondents "to nominate peer physicians to whom they would send members of their family," according to the UNC School of Medicine.

Researchers at UNC unveil importance of gene to heart

A gene that had previously been associated with leukemia has now been identified as important for heart health as well in a study by a team from the UNC School of Medicine, published in the February issue of the Genes and Development journal.

The gene, called DOT1L, can keep the heart from expanding. In the absence of the gene, the heart can expand, thinning its walls and weakening its ability to pump blood.

About one in three cases of congestive heart failure is due to dilation.

The study mainly focused on mice, but samples of human heart tissue showed the gene could be similarly beneficial to people.

National service award will close for applications today

The deadline for a national scholarship open to students interested in public service has been extended to 5 p.m. today.

Applications for the Students in Service Awards are open to all students and are specifically seeking "inspirational college students who are positively impacting social and environmental challenges facing our communities."

Multiple prizes will be given out, ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000, to help with the projects proposed by the nominees.

A group of 50 semifinalists will be chosen by online voting and a selection committee. The projects can be viewed and voted on at <http://www.serviceawards.org/> by clicking on "Nominees" and then a specific project.

CITY BRIEFS

Three Chapel Hill students named scholarship finalists

Three Chapel-Hill Carrboro City Schools students have been named finalists in the National Achievement Scholarship Program.

Helena Archer and Kyle Grant of Chapel Hill High School and Cedric Duquene of East Chapel Hill High School have received certificates of achievement for being named finalists.

The students were among more than 1,200 students selected nationwide.

All will be considered for 800 National Achievement Scholarships to outstanding black American students in 2011.

Scholarship notifications are expected in late February.

Summer camp registration starts for town residents

Chapel Hill residents may begin registering for summer day camps offered by town Parks and Recreation at www.townofchapel-hill.org/register today.

Orange County residents may begin registering on Feb. 14 and non-residents may register on Feb. 21.

Camps are available for elementary and middle school children.

Dryer fire shuts down 411 West restaurant on Sunday

Before Christina Aguilera sang the nation into Super Bowl XLV, a small smoke fire began in the restaurant laundry room dryer of 411 West, reported Chapel Hill Battalion Chief Jeff Cabe.

No damages occurred, General Manager Tommy O'Connell said.

411 West closed for business for the night.

Community development grant applications available

Applications are now available for the 2011-12 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. If your organization has an innovative idea or project that would benefit low- to moderate-income residents of Chapel Hill, consider applying for CDBG funds.

Applications are due by 5 p.m. Feb. 28.

-From staff and wire reports

Hospital needs health reform

UNC Hospitals losing money on uninsured

BY JEN SERDECHNAIA
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

UNC Hospitals is continuing to rely on health care reform as a way to reduce costs even though the legislation is being challenged and might even be repealed.

The hospital has been losing millions in uncompensated care costs and is counting on the provision in the reform that requires everyone to be insured by 2014.

But that specific provision is facing scrutiny nationwide in legislatures and in the courts.

Even legislators in North Carolina are looking to join more than two dozen other states in challenging the provision, meaning that UNC Hospitals' chances for saving money could be jeopardized.

Health care reform is essential to the 50 million uninsured in the U.S., said Sandra Greene, a professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management. And this doesn't include all the people who are underinsured, meaning they have such high co-pay and deductible payments that they cannot really use health care services.

Many think the challenge will go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, said Joan Krause, a professor in the UNC School of Law.

But UNC Hospitals is preparing to cut costs whether or not the reform sticks.

"We believe that health care reform is happening," said UNC Hospitals spokeswoman Jennifer James. "And if it's repealed, we wouldn't change what we're doing."

She said UNC Hospitals is now planning to reduce costs with the implementation of electronic medical records, accountable care organizations and new partnerships — like the one with BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina for a primary care facility.

"We will do this regardless of legislation," James said. "As a system with or without health care reform, we will find a way to deliver the best health care for patients to reduce their costs and our costs."

"We will do better and do our best," she said.

The expansion of primary care services is crucial because allowing the emergency room to serve as the location of primary care is becoming increasingly expensive, said Don Dalton, spokesman for the N.C. Hospital Association.

"What we're going to see is hospitals all over the state continue to work with local networks to provide local access and improving quality

of care so we are delivering cost-effective and cost-efficient care," he said.

The cost-saving aspect of health care reform is giving people the ability to seek help when they first fall ill through primary care services as opposed to relying on emergency rooms when they are in a worse condition, Greene said.

"That's more cost-effective," she said.

"And I can't imagine someone wanting to repeal the insurance reforms that are now preventing insurance companies from dropping people with pre-existing conditions."

Although two court decisions have ruled the reform to be unconstitutional, it is too early to assume there will be any repeal, she said. Especially because two judges have also ruled the provision to be constitutional.

If the provision had been structured as a tax as opposed to a mandate, it might have been more difficult to challenge it in courts, Krause said.

The question is whether Congress has the power to mandate people to buy something.

However, not putting forth the provision in the form of a tax was a political compromise to avoid public dissatisfaction, she said.

Contact the State & National Editor at state@dailytarheel.com.

Food center opening delayed

Entrepreneurial director sought

BY CHAD ROYAL
STAFF WRITER

A new food processing center's opening date has been pushed back to April, with more than half the construction left to be completed.

The Piedmont Food and Agricultural Processing Center, which broke ground in October in Hillsborough, will not open in March as previously anticipated due to delays in the contract with the general contractor, said Noah Ranells, Orange County agricultural economic development coordinator.

The county has hired Concord-based Morlando Construction LLC to oversee the building effort, which is about 47 percent complete.

Ranells said the largest efforts in the construction process thus far have been demolishing and replacing the floor and installing plumbing.

As of now, Ranells said there is no specific opening date set, but equipment is being purchased and applications are being evaluated in hopes of hiring a director for the center soon.

"We're looking for a strong entrepreneur attitude," he said. "Someone who has experience with food business and good fiscal management."

The food processing center also received almost \$80,000 from a state Specialty Crop Grant funded through a U.S. Department of Agriculture program, Ranells said.

He said the building has received about \$1.4 million in grants, which he said would not only cover the entire construction but also leave \$75,000 to go toward operation costs.

Orange County Commissioner Barry Jacobs, who serves as chairman of the steering committee for the processing center, said he's seen a lot of community interest in the project.

"(There are) a lot of food entrepreneurs and a lot of customers who know about personal and environmental health," he said.

Ranells said the processing center's e-mail list contains about 250 people who he hopes will be potential customers.

Rob Bowers, owner of Whitted Bowers Farm in Cedar Grove, said he plans to use the facilities for his business.

Bowers' farm sells organic fruits and vegetables using sustainable practices. He said using the processing center will allow him to sell his produce throughout the year.

"Having this facility makes access to the equipment easier," he said. "It will take us a lot less time."

He said the processing center will help those hoping to start a business because the capital costs for and access to equipment are an obstacle for many initial small-business owners.

"I think it will have a tremendous impact," he said.

Contact the City Editor at city@dailytarheel.com.



DTH/CARTER MCCALL

Carla Shuford of Chapel Hill plays with Mac, an 11-month-old Golden Retriever assistance dog, at the Eyes Ears Nose and Paws open house.

DOG KNOWS BEST

Program trains dogs to sniff out problems

BY ALISON LEE
STAFF WRITER

Carla Shuford of Chapel Hill watched as a 7-month-old Golden Retriever used her sense of smell to detect a high blood sugar saliva sample, signal a handler, fetch an aid kit and dial a single-button phone.

The retriever — named Stella — is a service and diabetic assistance dog in training as a part of the Carrboro-based organization Eyes Ears Nose and Paws.

Shuford, who is without one of her legs, said she was fascinated by the dogs' abilities and hoped she could qualify for the program.

"I'm more compatible with a dog than with a man," she said.

As program director of the group, Deb Cunningham trains the service dogs and is now working to become the first East-Coast trainer to teach dogs to detect high levels of blood sugar.

"I love the fact that the dog is here to help, but it's also an incomparable companion."

NANCY KIPLINGER, CHAPEL HILL RESIDENT

Seeking more volunteers to accomplish this goal, the organization held an open house and live demonstration Saturday afternoon.

The group's Chief Executive Officer Maria Ikenberry said finding "puppy parents" for service dogs is an important step in their training process, and the open house served as an opportunity to connect potential foster parents, owners and dogs.

While the group could use kenneling, Cunningham and Ikenberry are looking for more foster parents because living with people helps the dogs socialize.

"We want them to be in real homes to

SEE SERVICE DOGS, PAGE 4



DTH/CARTER MCCALL

Mac showcases his assistance dog skills by turning light switches with his nose and paws.

Senior class president candidates speak out

Chen, Currie promote 'Carolina experience'

BY CHRISTINA AUSTIN
STAFF WRITER

She is known to many of her friends as "Su-Chin" after the character from the movie "Juno."

But Susan Chen may soon earn herself a new title.

Chen, an African-American studies and communication studies double major, is joining Omar Currie, an elementary education major, to run for senior class president and vice president, respectively.

"If you would have told me a year ago that I would be singing and dancing in the Pit, I would have thought you were crazy," Chen said.

She and Currie spent the majority of their afternoons campaigning in the Pit last week, dancing and singing while holding up a wooden cutout of a cupcake, which they said represents their campaign.

"People just flocked to the cupcake," Currie said.

According to their campaign website, the cake part of the cupcake represents a stu-



DTH/MELISSA KEY

Susan Chen (left) and Omar Currie.

dent's classes and memories, or the foundation of their UNC experience.

The icing represents the exciting finishing touches of the "Carolina experience." They said they hope their candidacy will bring seniors that finishing touch.

Robert Lapp, their campaign manager,

SEE CHEN, PAGE 4

Drescher, Saad stress class unity, involvement

BY CHRISTINA AUSTIN
STAFF WRITER

Dean Drescher and Mohammad Saad are unbeatable when they're together.

Or so says their campaign manager, Spencer Beasley.

"If they are together, they are like an unstoppable force," Beasley said of the team running for senior class presidents.

Drescher, a journalism and religious studies double major, said she was inspired to run for the position by former student body president Eve Carson.

"When I was a summer editor for The Daily Tar Heel, I wrote a column about Eve Carson," Drescher said. "I was inspired by her commitment to help her classmates."

Saad, a health policy and management major, said he first became interested in the position when he became involved in First-Year Focus Council, a student government organization for freshmen.

"I saw a class unity that I didn't expect in college," he said. "I didn't see it as much though in other levels of student government."



DTH/MELISSA KEY

Mohammad Saad (left) and Dean Drescher.

This sense of class unity is what the pair said they hope to bring the senior class. They plan on offering events that will appeal to all groups in the class. Senior trivia nights, picnics on the quad and movie nights are included in their social platform.

They also said they want to make service

SEE SAAD, PAGE 4