

# HEALTH

## AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY KICKS OFF BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Las Vegas, NV—The American Cancer Society, Nevada Division, Clark County Unit, recently kicked off Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which runs the entire month of October, with a high tea and fashion show, featuring breast cancer survivors as models, at the Emerald Springs Inn in Las Vegas.

The kick-off, which featured keynote speakers, Dr. David Steinberg, Dr. Kirk Cammack, Dr. Raul Meoz, and Executive Director for the Commission For Hospital Patients, Patricia Jarman, addressed the importance of mammography, current breast cancer treatment, early detection and the male's perspective to the 100 plus women in attendance.

Additionally, Mrs. Marilyn Quayle, who was originally scheduled to attend, sent a video message to welcome the participants and to remind them of the importance of mammography and breast self exam. "I lost my own mother to breast cancer and she was a doctor. It goes to show that you take better care of other people than you do yourself, and that must stop. Take control of your life, know your family history and do breast self exam every month."

Nevada Congresswoman Barbara Vucanovich sent her greeting by representative Joan Dimmitt, who presented a certificate of appreciation to Southern Area Director, Dianne Fontes, for outstanding

commitment in promoting public awareness of breast cancer.

Renewing its commitment to breast cancer control, the American Cancer Society has made the disease one of its top nationwide priorities in the 1990's. The new emphasis on this complex and challenging problem comes after the society's announcement in 1991 that a woman's lifetime risk for breast cancer had increased to one in nine.

Over the last decade, the American Cancer Society has invested over \$43 million in research directly related to breast cancer. This will result in future therapies and more sophisticated detection.

At the local level, support services offered by the American Cancer Society include Reach To Recovery, a pioneering program in patient services that matches a woman, newly diagnosed with breast cancer, with a woman who has been treated for the disease; I Can Cope, which explains to cancer patients what to expect during illness; and Look Good Feel Better, where cosmetologists teach cancer patients how to work with their changing image as they go through treatment.

For more information about the American Cancer Society and its programs, call 798-6877.

### HEALTH BRIEFS

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The Clark County Health District is searching for persons who are able to serve as loving and supportive friends of patients and families experiencing terminal illness. These persons will serve as volunteers in the Health District Hospice Program.

Thirty (30) hours of training are provided for volunteers at the Clark County Health District. Additional training in special areas is also available. An application and personal interview are required prior to training.

Please read the following detailed information. If you think you can fill this very special calling, contact Edie Blanchard, Coordinator of Volunteer Services, Clark County Health District, 625 Shadow Lane, Las Vegas - 383-1341.

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**HOSPICE TRAINING RECRUITMENT**

The Clark County Health District Hospice Program is looking for volunteers who are able to provide emotional support and assistance to terminally ill patients and their families.

Volunteers should be available 3-5 hours each week, be at least 18 years of age, and have their own transportation.

Extensive training will be provided at the Clark County

Health District, beginning in September.

For more information or application, contact Edie Blanchard, coordinator of volunteer services, at 383-1341.

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CPR-FIRST AID TRAINING INSTITUTE has developed a special course for babysitters. The class, for boys and girls (11-18 years old), teaches safety, child and infant CPR and "basic" do's and don'ts of babysitting. Each student will receive an AHA CPR card and a "Babysitting" Certificate. The course will be held the second Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The cost is \$17.00 and includes all teaching materials.

Anyone wishing any more information or wanting to register for a class should call Kenneth Glover or W.K. Vandygriff at 876-9177.

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"The president has declared October as Lupus Awareness month. Learn and Live. Are you aware that there are millions of men and women that are not aware that they have symptoms of undiagnosed Lupus? There is a chapter of the Lupus Foundation of America here in Las Vegas. The chapter is located at 1555 E. Flamingo Rd., Ste. 439. Call 369-0474 anytime for more information.

### HEALTH WATCH BLACK WOMEN & LUPUS

Did you know that lupus is a disease that occurs more frequently in young black women than in any other group? Lupus can be serious, but with early detection and good treatment, most people with lupus can lead a normal life.

Considering these facts, it is important that Black Americans, particularly young, black women know about lupus, its symptoms, and its treatment.

Lupus is a disease that can affect many parts of the body. In lupus, something goes wrong with the body's immune system, and this powerful protective system is no longer able to defend the body against illness. Instead, the immune system attacks healthy tissues.

There are three types of lupus. The most serious of these is systemic lupus erythematosus which may harm the skin, joints, kidneys, brain, lungs and heart. Discoid or cutaneous lupus mainly affects the skin. Lupus caused by medications, or drug-induced lupus, goes away when the medication is stopped.

How can you tell if you or someone you know has lupus? the signs of lupus differ from one person to another. Some people have many signs of the disease. Others have just a few. The common signs of lupus are:

- Red rash or color change on the face, often in the shape of a butterfly across the bridge of the nose.
- Painful or swollen joints.
- Unexplained fever.
- Chest pain with breathing.
- Unusual loss of hair.
- Pale or purple fingers or toes from cold or stress.
- Sensitivity to the sun.
- Low blood count.

These signs are more important when they occur together.

Only a doctor can diagnose lupus. If you think you or someone you know has lupus, see a doctor right away. The doctor will perform an examination and test for the disease.

The cause of lupus is unknown. However, research doctors have learned a great deal about lupus and are studying new ways to treat and

(See *Lupus*, Page 18)

**— HELP —**

The AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY desperately needs drivers to take cancer patients to and from their treatment locations. Contact Gina at (702) 798-6877 NOW!

### VIEW FROM HHS

by  
Louis W. Sullivan, M.D.



On average, women in our society live longer than men. But there are problems that must be addressed to improve the status of women's health and quality of their lives.

Recognizing that threats to women's health frequently are different from those of men, the Department of Health and Human Services has undertaken a number of new efforts to deal effectively with their special needs.

These needs are real:

—Nearly one in two female deaths results from cardiovascular diseases—and nearly half of all women who have heart attacks die within a year, compared to 31 percent of men.

—In the 1960s, one in 14 women developed breast cancer; today one in nine can expect to. Another 20,000 will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer this year.

—Osteoporosis affects nearly half of all women over 45, as many as 90 percent of those over age 75, resulting in more than a million broken bones annually.

—The 90,000 women who die from stroke each year represent 61 percent of the total number of stroke deaths.

Some other relevant data show that approximately 75 percent of nursing home residents are women, women have more chronic, debilitating illnesses, seek medical attention more often than do men, take more medicines—especially antidepressants and tranquilizers—and undergo more surgical procedures.

For minority and disadvantaged women, there is a further health disparity. In four of the major causes

of death for women—heart disease and stroke, homicide and AIDS—death rates are twice as high for black women as for white women.

Much of our health care system's knowledge is based on research in which men predominated in the population study groups. Part of what we are doing now is meeting the challenge of establishing a science base that will permit reliable diagnoses, effective treatment and preventive strategies for women.

An important step toward that goal is the completion of a comprehensive Action Plan on Women's Health, and the establishment of a new Office on Women's Health, for the U.S. Public Health Service.

In addition, an Office of Research on Women's Health has been created at the NIH, helping ensure that research supported by NIH adequately addresses women's health issues and increases participation of women in clinical trials and in the conducting of our research efforts.

How serious we are is reflected in our grants and contract announcements, which state that no applicant will receive funds until there has been assurance that the proposed research study group population complies with the policy on including women.

Thousands of women from across the nation also are participating in our efforts through conferences and study groups.

Our bottom-line challenge is to make a positive difference in the quality of life of women of all ages and races, and to make improved women's health a national reality.

(Dr. Sullivan is U.S. secretary of health and human services.)

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