



# HEALTH FOCUS

Donald Wesson, M.D. Baylor College of Medicine in Houston

## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE: A CONTROLLABLE ENEMY

By Donald E. Wesson, M.D.

Most African Americans know someone with high blood pressure or hypertension, its medical name. Most do not know that this common disease is a major cause of death and debilitation in the African-American community. Blacks are twice as likely to have the disease compared to other Americans and are more likely to suffer the medical complications associated with high blood pressure. Many people with high blood pressure who have not suffered these complications remain at risk.

Beyond the individual tragedy inflicted by this disease, the

African-American community as a whole suffers the lost contributions that these individuals would have otherwise made. This makes high blood pressure an enemy to be faced by the entire community. The encouraging news is that this menace can be controlled and its devastating effects reduced.

High blood pressure usually causes no symptoms until damage to the body is severe. Many hypertensives "feel okay" and so do not take proper steps to control the disease, leading to slow, irreversible damage to body tissues. High blood pressure, even when mild, causes strokes and heart attacks, and is

associated with kidney failure. Proper control of high blood pressure reduces the incidence of all three. It is important for all persons, particularly African Americans, to have their blood pressure checked to take action, if necessary.

Everyone with hypertension should be under a physician's care. Once the physician recommends a strategy for blood pressure control, patients should ask questions in order to understand the plan of action and be aware of potential problems. Patients should stay under a doctor's care who will follow their progress and determine whether adjustments in the plan are needed.

Remember, except in rare cases, high blood pressure is a life-long disease that cannot be cured but can be controlled to reduce the chance for its potential complications.

Exciting new information gathered in recent years demonstrates that blood pressure can be lowered in individuals with hypertension by lifestyle changes. These modifications can control high blood pressure in some individuals without medications in others. They include reducing salt in the diet, stopping tobacco and alcohol use, weight loss in obese individuals, increased exercise. These non-drug strategies are exciting because they hold the potential to lower the incidence of hypertension when employed community-wide. Such a strategy could be carried out at the "grass roots" level and aimed at not just the individual hypertensive but at an entire community. Such community "empowerment" would not only reduce hypertension, but would improve the health of the African-American community as a whole.

# HEALTH

## THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY AND KVBC CHANNEL 3 PRESENT "PROFILES IN SURVIVAL"

The American Cancer Society and KVBC Channel 3 will present "Profiles in Survival," an in-depth look at cancer survivorship and the progress and challenges of current cancer research, to air 7:00 p.m. April 4, 1993. Hosted by actress/singer Susan Anton, "Profiles in Survival" features the stories of cancer survivors from across the country.

In conjunction with this broadcast, KVBC will also be airing a very special Call 3 Night focusing on "How to Survive Cancer." Specialists in the field will be on hand to answer the public's questions on any aspect of cancer, from its prevention to its diagnosis and treatment. News 3's week-end anchor Rikki Cheese will be on hand to conduct live interviews with local doctors and physicians. Channel 3's special phone lines will be set up to take calls for the two hours of the show's broadcast. Rikki will also produce three local segments which will be inserted into the program. These stories along with advances and treatments of cancer here in Las

Vegas. Among those telling their stories will be Richard Belzer, the comedian/actor and star of "Homicide;" Baseball Hall of Fame member Stan Musial; singer and songwriter Carl Perkins; Angel Wallenda, from the famous tightrope walking family The Great Wallendas; former Dallas Cowboy cheerleader Patti Thorn; and Kathy Rush, the highly successful women's college basketball coach.

"Profiles in Survival" teaches through the examples of those who have survived cancer. Viewers see how the disease can be beaten through early detection and treatment.

The program also offers updates on the latest news in cancer control and research, as well as a cancer quiz for viewers to test their knowledge about cancer. This American Cancer Society produced and syndicated program presents all of its information in a positive and entertaining style.

Now in its 4th year, "Profiles in Survival" is a unique concept in prime-time viewing. About

one in three, or 85 million Americans now living, have had or will eventually have cancer. With advancements in detection and treatment, more and more people are surviving the disease, and relative survival rate has grown to 52%. "Profiles in Survival" offers not just information, but also hope, to individuals facing cancer and their families and loved ones.

The Sword of Hope is the symbol of the American Cancer Society. The American Cancer Society is the nationwide voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives from cancer, and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education, and service.

For more information about cancer or the American Cancer Society and its programs, contact your local American Cancer Society at 1325 E. Harmon Ave., Las Vegas, 89119, 798-6857, or call the Society's toll-free number at 1-800-ACS-2345. Look for the Sword to be sure it's the American Cancer Society.

### CPR WORKSHOPS

A pair of CPR workshops will be offered at the Johnson Community School, 7701 Ducharme Ave. The seminar will be presented on Wednesday, April 7 and again will cost \$11, and includes certification. Registration for both workshops continue through April 7. Seminars are designed for teens and adults, and are taught by CPR Plus. Call 229-6175 to register.

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## HIV/AIDS INSTRUCTOR COURSE

The Clark County Red Cross Chapter HIV/AIDS Education Program has scheduled an HIV/AIDS Instructor training course, as follows:

- Tuesday, April 20 — 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Monday and Tuesday, April 26 and 27 — 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Enrollment is limited and pre-

registration is mandatory. Due to funding cuts there is a minimal charge of \$45 for this training. This course offers a total of 26.4 Nursing Continuing Education Units and 24.0 Contact Hours from the State Board of Cosmetology. An additional \$2 fee per unit and/or contact hour is required for those who need Nurs-

ing CEUs and/or Cosmetology contact hours.

If you would like to attend, please contact our HIV/AIDS Education Coordinator, Juan Mora-Guzman, at (702) 384-1225 for registration information. Remember, education is the best tool to fight an epidemic like HIV/AIDS.

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### FUNDAMENTALS OF CPR

A workshop focusing on the fundamentals of CPR and life-saving is being offered at the Chuck Minker Sports Complex, 275 N. Mojave Rd. The 90-minute seminar takes place at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, April 10 and is designed for teens and adults. Registration continues through the day of the event, at a cost of \$12, which includes certification.

The workshop is being instructed by CPR Plus and sponsored by the City of Las Vegas. Call 229-6563.

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