

More Black children receive vaccines

By Lorinda M. Bullock
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - For the first time in 10 years, children of all races are equally getting the necessary series of vaccinations, says a survey released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It is somewhat encouraging that our rates of vaccination are increasing even though we are in the midst of a number of factors including uninsured children that would make you think that the rates would remain stable or decrease," said Dr. Albert Morris, president of the Na-

tional Medical Association, a professional organization of more than 30,000 African-American physicians.

According to the CDC, based on a random national telephone survey in 77 survey areas, the immunization coverage rates were 80 percent for children of multiple race, 77 percent for Asian children, 76 percent for Black children, 76 percent for White children and 76 percent for Hispanic children.

The CDC's National Immunization Survey reported that all children between 19 and 35 months are being vac-

inated routinely at or near record highs. Researchers also used vaccination records for nearly 17,500 children from the households that participated in the survey.

The numbers steadily rose for Black children in recent years. In 2002, the rate was about 66 percent, the study said. The rate for Hispanic children was slightly higher at about 68 percent in 2002.

Dr. Sarah Long, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Chief of the Section of Infectious Diseases at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia,

said the push of the CDC, her organization and schools has helped to make vaccinations more widely available in recent years.

"And (it's) becoming more ingrained in the culture of children when they're born in the hospital they are visited by a pediatrician and there's education that goes on. Not only about taking care of the baby when you go home but how you take care of the health of the baby," she said.

Morris also believes that school systems have really stepped up to spread knowledge about immunizations.

"Greater involvement of the school system to make sure that children are in fact vaccinated before they enter the school system is extremely helpful in making sure the rates steadily improve. I think that's really one of the important reasons that they are improving," he said.

Long said other technological innovations such as electronic databases kept by a number of hospitals and private practices also help doctors know exactly what kinds of vaccinations their small patients need.

The recent data from the

CDC is particularly good news, Long said, considering parents tend to slack off with doctor visits and vaccinations between six and 12 months.

"Between six months and a year, you might lose the child because people get out of the habit of thinking (about doctor visits) and all of the barriers that are in our systems to getting an appointment," she said.

"Some of these poor families are not very knowledgeable about what they are going to do next week, let alone six months... If you can keep them to the 12 months, then (See Vaccination, Page 7)

Blacks fail to practice preventive healthcare

By Melde Rutledge
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (NNPA) - A panel of health experts agreed that countless African-Americans are not taking care of their bodies as much as they should in order to stay out of the hospital.

"Healthcare and the Black Community" was the key session in a forum series on the campus of Winston-Salem State University on Sept. 16 during the State of Black North Carolina Conference 2006. The session explored the issue of African-Americans' resistance to and lack of action to ensure preventative steps to remain healthy.

"Where does health fall in one's priorities?" asked Michael Clements, director of the Downtown Health Plaza in Winston-Salem. Clements took part in the health forum, along with six other panelists representing major health organizations, various branches of medical practice and Black community-based health advocates.

As a child, Clements said that the only time members of his family visited the doctor was when they had severe ailments, such as bleeding or vomiting.

"We never had yearly checkups," he said.

Either because of not being able to afford healthcare or simply just putting off a visit, the panel discussed today's dismal fact that many Black families fail to visit a doctor's office.

"We need to make sure that we get screened and continue to get screened," said Dr. Marcella Butler of Forsyth Radiological Associ-

ates in Winston-Salem.

There are many reasons to have yearly physical exams. Some include screening for diseases, assessing risk for future medical problems, encouraging healthy lifestyles, updating vaccinations and keeping a relationship with your healthcare provider.

Butler explained that there are free screenings for various types of ailments at a variety of places for people who can't afford healthcare if they take the time to look for those places.

Heart disease, teen pregnancies, breast cancer and infant mortality numbers are down among African-Americans, according to Medical Network, Inc. However, the report also indicated that African-Americans are more likely to develop cancer than any other ethnic group, and AIDS and kidney disease remain major killers.

"HIV is the number one killer for African-Americans," said Gladys Robinson, executive director of Sickle Cell Disease Association of Piedmont.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2002 HIV/AIDS was among the top three causes of death for African-American men from age 25 to 54 and the top cause of death for African-American women age 25 to 54.

Because of the lack of education on HIV/AIDS, said Keith Grandberry, president of the Winston-Salem Urban League, many African-Americans still think of HIV/AIDS as a "gay" disease — and they continue to engage in unprotected sex.

(See Prevention, Page 7)

**There's money in *your* home.
Lock in a great rate today.**

6.74%^{*} APR
**10 Year
Fixed Rate Option**

**Get the convenience
of a Line of Credit with
the security of a fixed rate.**

*Equiline Home Equity Line of Credit with Fixed Rate
Option features*

- No closing costs
- No points
- No fees
- Low Rates with Five Star Service Guaranteed

How many stars does *your* bank have?

usbank
Five Star Service Guaranteed

usbank.com | 888-444-BANK (2265) ext. 4100

*The 6.74% fixed Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is available for terms up to 10 years, loan to value (LTV) of 80% or less. This loan is a Fixed Rate Option within a U.S. Bank Home Equity Line of Credit. Higher rates apply for higher loan to values. For example: a \$10,000 Fixed Rate Option for 120 months at 6.74% APR, monthly payments would be \$114.77. The Annual Percentage Rate (APR) on the variable portion of the line will vary at Prime Rate as published in the Wall Street Journal. As of September 18, 2006, variable rate for line of credit is Prime + 0% to Prime + 3% (8.25% APR to 11.25% APR). The rate will not exceed 25% APR. The floor rate is 4.99% APR. An annual fee of up to \$80 may apply after the first year. The first Fixed Rate Option is free; each additional one is \$50. Offer is subject to normal credit approval. Property insurance is required. Interest on amounts exceeding 100% of the available equity is not tax deductible. Consult your tax advisor regarding the deductibility of interest. Rates are subject to change. Some restrictions may apply. Home Equity loans and lines of credit are offered through U.S. Bank National Association ND. Member FDIC.