

## JUNE 2008 EVENTS

### JUNE: HIV/ AIDS AWARENESS

It's a subject no one likes to talk about, but it's one of the greatest challenges facing both the African American community and the world as a whole.

The war against HIV/AIDS is being fought on several levels: finding a cure, creating a vaccine, developing better medicines...but the most important thing we can do to combat HIV/AIDS is to PREVENT it. This month, the Wellness Committee has some events planned that will help educate us on the best ways to do that.



*The June Spotlight on Health will focus on HIV/AIDS Awareness.*

#### STIGMA: THE SILENT KILLER

Educational Brown Bag Session  
Thursday, June 26  
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Stokes Center for Aging

*Shemaz Reporter from Greene County Combined Health District will present information on HIV, specifically how it is affecting the African American community.*

#### FREE HIV TESTING

Greene County Combined Health District  
Wednesday Afternoons or By Appointment  
For more information call:  
937-374-5600

*Contact the GCCHD to learn your HIV status as well as how to reduce your risk of HIV infection. Clients are given a number (No names are used) to identify themselves and their test results. The program also provides up-to-date factual information on HIV/AIDS in order to promote responsible decision-making and HIV infection risk reduction.*

### VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

JUNE 1-30

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#### Special points of interest:

- \* June 27, 2008 is National HIV Testing Day!
- \* Sign up for the Information Session, "Stigma: The Silent Killer", to be held Thursday, June 26, at 2:00 p.m. in the Stokes Center on Aging.

### FROM THE CSU WELLNESS COMMITTEE: 2008 CSU HEALTH CHALLENGE

We are very excited this year about the progress of the 2008 CSU Health Challenge. Many employees have signed up and are reporting that they have been working hard representing their respective divisions and are looking forward to a win!

The Wellness Committee would like to give a reminder to all participants that it is very important that everyone involved

with the Challenge **record your exercise activities**, either in the Activity Log books or on the Activity Log form that's attached to the Health Challenge Weekly emails that are sent out. This information **must** then **be returned to the Human Resources Department** on **Thursday, July 31**. The winning Division will then be determined based on the percentage of participation.

Those individuals who turn in their Activity Log Books will also be eligible for a drawing for one of several gas cards that will be given out at this year's University Institute. Please don't miss out on your chance to win!

If you have any questions, feel free to call Evelyn Harrigan at x6650. Thank you, and let's keep moving toward better health!!

#### Did You Know?

June 27, 2008 is National HIV Testing Day. For more information, please visit: <http://www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days/testing/index.html>

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## **SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH: HIV/ AIDS AWARENESS MONTH**

**CSU Wellness**   
Promoting Wellness for Life

Look for us on the Web...  
**COMING SOON!**



2008 Wellness Calendar

- January  
Nutrition
- February  
Heart Healthy Month
- March  
Kidney Month
- April  
Cancer Month
- May  
Hypertension Awareness Month
- June  
AIDS Awareness Month
- July  
Smoking Awareness Month
- August  
Mental Health Awareness Month
- September  
Cholesterol Awareness Month
- October  
Breast and Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
- November  
Diabetes Awareness Month
- December  
Alcohol Awareness Month

### ***HIV: How It is Transmitted and How To Prevent It***

HIV and AIDS are life threatening conditions. here is no cure yet for HIV/ AIDS. The transmission of HIV occurs through three well documented means:

- 1) Having sexual relations with someone infected with HIV;
- 2) Sharing needles and syringes with someone infected with HIV; and
- 3) Being exposed (fetus or infant) to HIV before or during birth or through breast feeding. **HIV transmission can be prevented** through avoiding behaviors that expose someone to the means of transmission and by taking preventive measures if identified risk behaviors occur.

To protect yourself, do not inject illicit drugs and remember these ABCs:

- A= Abstinence
- B= Be Faithful
- C= Condoms



### ***HIV/AIDS and African Americans***

Of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, HIV and AIDS have hit African Americans the hardest. The reasons are not directly related to race or ethnicity, but rather to some of the barriers faced by many African Americans. These barriers can include poverty (being poor), sexually transmitted diseases, and stigma (negative attitudes, beliefs, and actions directed at people living with HIV/AIDS or directed at people who do things that might put them at risk for HIV).

When we look at HIV/AIDS by race and ethnicity, we see that African Americans have:

- **More illness.** Even though blacks (including African Americans) account for about 13% of the US population, they account for about half (49%) of the people who get HIV and AIDS.
- **Shorter survival times.** Blacks with AIDS often don't live as long as people of other races and ethnic groups with AIDS. This is due to the barriers mentioned above.
- **More deaths.** For African Americans and other blacks, HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death.

***We CAN prevent this disease! Get Tested... Know your status... Practice Safe Behaviors... Be Aware of the Facts about HIV/ AIDS!!***

### **HIV TESTING: DEALING WITH THE FEAR**

If you were to visit me in the Human Resources office, you would see that I have a "Magic 8 Ball" prominently displayed on my desk. It faithfully answers for me a lot of life's important questions, like: "Should I have Burger King for lunch? (Answer: My sources say no)" "Is he going to call me? (Answer: Reply hazy- try again)" "Is the price of gas going to go up again today? (Answer: Without a doubt)" It's a very useful tool...except when it comes to that one question:

Do I have HIV?

It's just scary. Everything about it: The disease, the statistics, the medications, the social implications, the question itself... it's all just so scary.

Our natural inclination is to ignore it. Tell ourselves that we feel fine or that it was just one time... Older people think only young people have the disease. Heterosexuals think only homosexuals get it. The Charlotte York- types think only the Samantha Jones- types (that's for all you "Sex in the City" fans) get it.

The fact is, no matter what "type" of person you are- HIV is an issue that we all need to think

about. Ignoring the question will not make it go away. Pretending to ignore your fear will not lessen it. Avoiding the truth of your status will not change it. It can only take away your ability to live a longer, fuller life if you are HIV+.

The good news is: finding out your HIV status is easier than ever. There are **free** tests available that are quick (you can find out your results in 20 minutes) and painless (the oral test is just a swab for the inside of your mouth). You can go on your lunch break or make an appointment for a representative from the GCCHD to meet you at a private location here on campus.

As writer A. Stephen Peiters says: "Life is hard. Fear is real. We have a choice about how to respond...We can choose to be scared to death, or scared to life. We can let our fear paralyze us, or we can let it motivate us to do everything we can to keep hope alive."

Let's choose to allow whatever fears we may have to motivate us toward greater knowledge of this disease, understanding and compassion for those living with HIV, and most of all, protection against it.

- Evelyn M. Harrigan