



# WEST SPA 5 AREA HEALTH OFFICE

# Chronicle



A publication for friends and neighbors of the West Service Planning Area

**Chronicle  
Summer 2003**

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- Possible Funding Opportunity
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## WATER: A SUMMER SIZZLE REMEDY!



Despite our proximity to the ocean, our Westside neighborhood experienced its fair share of the summer sizzles this year. Heat is very taxing to the human body and an inadequate water intake coupled with increased sweating lead to dehydration which is a preventable life threatening emergency. Water is an essential nutrient and performs many crucial tasks including nourishing our cells, carrying nutrients throughout our bodies, eliminating waste, regulating body temperature, providing our joints with proper

lubrication, and maintaining blood volume and blood pressure. Our bodies maintain an intricate water balance; inadequate levels of water intake can lead to kidney stones, urinary tract infections, and some chronic diseases such as heart disease and bladder and colorectal cancers. Children, the elderly, people taking certain medications, and obese individuals are more susceptible to dehydration and at increased risk for developing heat disorders.

### HOW TO GET YOUR DAILY WATER

Most people need 6-8 glasses of water each day to maintain a healthy fluid balance. In extreme heat, daily water intake should be increased. The easiest way to monitor fluid balance is to watch urinary output, amount, color, and frequency. The food and beverages we normally consume include water as well. Also fruits and vegetables especially lettuce, celery and other crisp vegetables are composed of an estimated 90 percent water. Protein-rich foods or even grain products may contain up to 1-2 thirds of their weight in water. A small but significant amount of water is produced as a by product of our body metabolism. We can increase our fluid intake by drinking plain water, juices, milk or other beverages. **Water, however is the drink of choice. Enjoy!**



## PARTNER FOR HIGH TECH VISION

VFC and the Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) have partnered on a telemedicine program that connects volunteer medical specialists at the Jules Stein Eye Institute at UCLA to patients at the Venice Family Clinic by way of the information super highway and a digital retinal camera. (see page 4)



Venice Family Clinic:  
604 Rose Avenue, Venice, CA 90291

## CLAIMING YOUR RIGHTS AS A MEDICARE BENEFICIARY

When you have Medicare, you have the right to the care you need. You also have the right to be fully informed and to be involved in decisions made about your care. This means you have the right to question decisions you think aren't best for you, and to get a second opinion from another medical expert.

California Medical Review Incorporated (CMRI) is a non-profit federally funded health care quality improvement organization that assists and advocates for Medicare beneficiary Rights. CMRI works with healthcare providers, consumer groups and community-based organizations to improve the quality of care that Medicare beneficiaries receive.

CMRI's multilingual Help line can be reached toll-free at 1-800-841-1602, weekdays between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. The hearing impaired can use a special TTD line at 1-800-881-5980.

*Erica L. Jones,*



**You have a right to  
quality medical care!**

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM'S NEW FOCUS

The Los Angeles County's Physical Activity Program was created in 1999 to decrease the burden of disease due to obesity-related medical conditions plaguing the County. In October 2002, due to budget reductions in all Public Health Programs, the Physical Activity Program redirected its focus from providing direct services to developing specific strategies to engage communities of color in obesity prevention interventions.



- Providing leadership in Los Angeles County to promote wellness and prevent obesity through the use of targeted media with culturally congruent messages, content, and delivery.
- Promoting favorable policies and regulations at the state and local levels including schools, the private sector, and community-based organizations in order to lower the obesity trends currently plaguing adults and children.
- Providing health education in 12 Latin American Consulates in Los Angeles to provide their clients with information regarding healthy lifestyles, including how to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives, in an effort to reverse possible weight gain trends with increased acculturation to the American way of life.
- Developing long-standing partnerships/collaborations of mutual benefit.

Obtaining outside (non-County) sources of funding is a critical activity to sustain the Physical Activity Program to effectively provide leadership in the County, engage in policy work, and provide direct services such as trainings on how to perform short exercise breaks at work.

**To partner with LAC Physical Activity Program or for additional information, please call 213-351-7887.**

## TAKE ACTION!

Obesity is a public health epidemic and a leading cause of chronic disease. Obesity rates are about 19% in Los Angeles County and 11% in the West SPA. Obesity related care costs in excess of 3.4 billion dollars in this county.<sup>1</sup> Reducing the impact of obesity requires a broad public health and societal response. Parents and schools can join forces to impact this problem by focusing on changing the sedentary behaviors among our children and adolescents. Decreased television viewing time, increased physical activity through after school programs and athletic clubs, reducing exposure to ads for high fat/sugar food, and educating parents, care takers, and children on healthier eating habits are among the techniques aimed at lowering obesity rates among our children. The public demand for action coupled with responsible and health conscious policies can help communities to stop this epidemic from growing further.

Obesity is even more prevalent among low-income families already at risk for many chronic diseases. “To impact the health of low income Latino and African American families, public/private partnerships, including alliances with Southland Farmers’ Market, California 5 A Day for Better Health, and Los Angeles Region Project LEAN, have been built around a Community Health Worker/Promotora Model to provide outreach education programs” (*Joan Gustavson, Nutrition Program*).



1. Obesity on the rise, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, 2003

The goal of these programs is to promote healthier lifestyles among low-income minority families. Promotoras or community health workers are used by the Los Angeles County Nutrition Program to provide culturally sensitive outreach and education to low-income residents in their own communities. **To obtain additional information or to participate, please call *Joan Gustavson*, at the Los Angeles County Nutrition Program at: 213-351-7889.**

## INCREASED ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT FUNDING

Certain census tracts in our Westside neighborhood are being reconfigured in order to help determine Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs), Medically Underserved Populations (MUPs) and Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

A census tract is a “small, statistical subdivision of a county delineated by a local committee of census data users for the purpose of presenting data.” Census tracts are “designed to be relatively homogeneous units with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions”, average about 4,000 inhabitants, and “may be split by any sub-county geographic entity”. Demographic information is needed to determine each area’s relative need for medical personnel.

Medical Service Study Areas (MSSA’S) follow U.S. census tract boundaries, and may include more than one tract. MSSAs focus on ethnicity, poverty, population age structure, and the percentage of limited English-speakers. MSSA’S are vital to the provision of medical services. Members of the Westside Health Coalition worked closely this summer with the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) and the community to propose reconfigurations of the MSSAs. The reconfiguration takes place after each census is completed to help determine or qualify sites for potential Federal or State funding programs. The proposal identified one additional MUA to make our community eligible to apply for funds from the Federal government through a variety of programs.

1-<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>



## PARTNER FOR HIGH TECH VISION SCREENING

Continued from page 1

Established in 1966, the UCLA Jules Stein Eye Institute state of the art facilities offer comprehensive programs for eye disorders, ophthalmologic research and education as well as community outreach.

Founded in 1970, the Venice Family Clinic (VFC) provides medical care to thousands of West SPA residents; VFC treats in excess of 1,500 patients with diabetes, 80% of whom are aged 40 and older. Patients typically have no insurance and subsist on incomes of \$18,200 for a family of four.

The digital retinal camera, which was procured through the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Community Access Program, allows VFC to take a panoramic image of the retina. Accessing the electronic image directly from the VFC server, the JSEI team scans it for diabetic retinopathy – a disease which could result in blindness. With early detection, loss of vision can be avoided. The VFC Clinic Coordinator takes a retinal photograph of the patient's eye, which stores an electronic copy of the image. After the image is taken and stored, the Jules Stein Eye Institute team interprets the digital image. JSEI team can access the image directly from the VFC server, without it ever leaving the office. After viewing the image, the clinical impression is directly entered into the VFC computer. Next, the Clinic Coordinator reviews the downloaded diagnostic and treatment information and physician's care management instructions. S/he then schedules follow-up appointments with the JSEI's volunteer ophthalmologists and retinal specialists, or Harbor UCLA County Hospital.



TRC-NW65 Non-Mydriatric Digital Retinal Camera

Linda Feldman,

Director of Communications  
Venice Family Clinic

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## BURKE PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER SHINES!

The Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) clinic at Burke Health Center in Santa Monica offers free STD screening and treatment services to the West SPA residents. With only two sessions per week (Tuesdays, morning and afternoon), and absolutely the minimum staff, after significant downsizing from county budget cuts, Burke Health Center STD clinic treated 105 patients or 3% of all STD patients seen throughout the county in the month of June. Despite space limitations due to construction, the average number of patients per session at Burke's STD clinic was 13.1 in June 2003.

**Many thanks to our wonderful and dedicated staff for their team work and ingenuity to accommodate the West side STD patients despite our incredibly limited resources.**



Yvonne Burke Public Health Center: 2509 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405

## THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE HERBS AND SPICES!



Source: Redland Organics

Ever wonder what herbs and spices to use to liven up your salads, casseroles and marinades? Now you can find the answer to this and all of your other food and nutrition questions at the **Ask the Dietitian at Farmers' Market Program** (ATDFM) - a program managed by the Los Angeles County Health Department Public Health Nutrition Program. ATDFM, now in its sixth year, promotes a monthly health theme, answers nutrition and food questions and provides healthy, tasty food samples through colorful displays, preparing easy recipes on-site and providing free health education literature. Communities can expect the ATDFM program to be at their Farmers' Markets once a month at a specific time and day. Registered dietitians, nutrition experts, community workers and volunteers from affiliated agencies staff all programs.

Please call the Nutrition Program at 213.351.7889 or log onto <http://lapublichealth.org/nut/nutmark.htm> for specific times and dates and locations.

### How to Store Herbs and Spices

Fresh herbs are a great way to add pizzazz and flavor to your families meals without adding extra fat. Herbs and spices won't keep indefinitely – even dried! To lock in the aromatic flavors of fresh and dry herbs, you need to store carefully.

**Store dry herbs and spices in tightly-covered containers – in cool, dry, dark places (not the refrigerator).** Avoid placing your spice rack near a window or above the stove. Heat, bright light, and air destroy flavor. Moisture can cause herbs and spices to mold.

**Date dry herbs and spices when you buy them.** Then use them as you need them, but preferably within a year. After a while, even properly stored seasonings lose their full "bouquet".

**To check the freshness, rub seasonings between your fingers, and smell the aroma.** If there's not much, get a new supply.

**One way to keep fresh herbs longer: treat them like a bouquet of flowers!** Snip the stem ends, then stand them in a glass of water. Cover them with a plastic bag, and store in the refrigerator. Change the water every couple of days.

**Freezing Herbs.** Wash and dry them well; then seal them in plastic freezer bags. Or snip herbs, then freeze them with water in ice cube trays. Adding an "herb ice cube" to soups and stews is easy! Basil, chives, dill

fennel, parsley, rosemary and tarragon among are among the herbs that freeze well. Heat them in the oven at 100 for several hours with the door slightly open. Remove the leaves before they get browned. Cool, then store in tightly covered containers.

**Drying herbs in the microwave.** Wash the leaves first, then place them between paper towels. Then dry the herbs on the lowest setting for two or three minutes.

For a quick and refreshing salad using fresh herbs, try this recipe!

#### TABBOULEH

##### Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cups fine bulgur or couscous
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- 4 Tbs. parsley, finely chopped
- 1 Tbs. fresh mint leaves, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 1/2 cup green or red onion, seeded and diced
- 1/2 bell pepper, diced
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 Tbs. Olive oil
- 3/4 tsp. Salt

##### Preparation:

Mix 3/4 cup boiling water with 1 1/4 cup dry couscous or barley. Add 3 Tbs. Olive oil and 1/3 cup lemon juice. Stir well. Cover and let sit for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork. Add tomato, onion, parsley, mint, bell pepper and cucumber and toss lightly. Refrigerate for 15 minutes. Fluff with a fork and serve. Serves 5.



# West Quarterly Chronicle

## Selected Reportable Diseases Provisional Data

### West SPA Team

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Disease	Jan-Mar 03	Jan-Mar 02	Apr-Jun 03	Apr-Jun 02
AIDS	23	12	29	17
Amebiasis	4	4	0	0
Campylobacteriosis	22	17	25	39
Chlamydial Infections	301	260	299	321
Encephalitis	2	0	1	0
Gonorrhea	130	88	94	76
Hepatitis Type A	10	6	3	10
Hepatitis Type B	0	3	4	1
Hepatitis Type C	0	0	0	0
Measles	0	0	0	0
Meningitis	4	3	4	2
Meningococcal Infections	0	3	2	0
Non-gonococcal Urethritis	51	40	41	41
Pertussis	5	5	4	1
Salmonellosis	13	10	18	19
Shigellosis	28	8	2	7
Syphilis, primary & secondary	9	6	4	8
Syphilis, early latent (<1 yr.)	6	4	1	2
Tuberculosis	4	4	4	10

# WEST SPA 5

## CHRONICLE

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**Public Health Mission: To safeguard and improve the health of all Los Angeles County residents.**