



Greetings! We have received a lot of great feedback about our new logo. We are currently working on the Closing the Gap in Health Care website. The website will have all of the audio health tips aired on the radio in 2006 as well as written health tips that didn't make it to the radio. This week we have included two tips. The first tip relays important information your physician should tell you about prescribed medication. The second tip is Dr. Bell's address to the mayor and city council members advocating a smoke-free Lowcountry. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email Dr. Bell by responding to this newsletter. Have a good week.

Peace and Blessings,

CGHC Staff

### Physicians Must do a Better Job of Giving Instructions

I don't get a big kick out of pointing fingers but, if it is the truth, so be it. A recent article in the Archives of Internal Medicine reported that some physicians could probably do a better job at giving patients information about

medications. The five standards of communication when prescribing a medication are:

1. The name of the medication
2. The reason for taking the medication
3. The length of time the medication should be taken
4. The adverse effect of the medication
5. The number of times the medication should be taken or the spray used daily or, the frequency or timing of taking the pills.

The study reported that physicians fulfilled only 3 of the 5 standards of communication studied. The study evaluated internal medicine physicians, family physicians, and cardiologists. The study surveyed patients 55 years of age and older, males and females, educated and white. My awareness of the problem has been heightened from the results of this survey. It is not uncommon for patients to think that blood pressure and cholesterol medicines are temporary. I would submit, however, that patients also have some responsibility in this dilemma. If you don't know, then you should ask your physician. If the information is not completely understood, it is likely that the patient will not take the medication correctly if at all. Also, it is more likely that the patient will discontinue the medication and adverse reactions will occur. Both physicians and patients must do a better job of giving and receiving information about medications. I am Dr. Thaddeus John Bell---Closing the Gap in Health Care.

Bell Update Chapter 2 Volume 1  
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## Smoke Free Lowcountry Address

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about smoking. Smoking is a major concern of the Health Community. Our community takes pride in promoting clean and healthy living. We thrive on the reputation of being a sports-minded and healthy city. We pride ourselves on our beautiful shorelines and marsh areas. Several world class hospitals are located here. We have one of the largest as well as one of the best Bridge Runs in the world. We are currently enjoying a state-of-the-art bridge, the Ravenel Bridge, that is distinguished by a 2.8 mile walking and biking path. We proudly point to it and say to the others in our state, as well as the world, that Charleston, South Carolina believes in and promotes an environment where health is important. However, we must also remember that our State is at the bottom, 48 to be exact, when it comes to healthy outcomes. Heart disease, Stroke, Hypertension, Diabetes and Lung Cancer, as well as other causes of Cancer, rank high in our State, particularly among the African American population. According to the well-respected CDC and the Surgeon General's recent report on secondary smoke, smoking is a major cause of death, disability, and daily suffering. Our State ranks very high in Stroke, Heart Disease, Diabetes, and Cancer and smoking plays a major role in these illnesses. Many of you on this committee know someone who has suffered from the primary or secondary causes of smoking. I have spoken out on many occasions about primary and secondary smoking. Secondary smoke is deadly to both the nonsmoker and the smoker. In our community it

unfortunately impacts the poor and minorities who often have little to say about the environment in which they work. New research shows that secondary smoke is another cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and ear infections and asthma attack in children. The Surgeon General's Report on secondary smoke says, "The only way to protect nonsmokers from the dangerous chemicals in secondhand smoke is to eliminate smoking indoors." The report continues by saying "Smoking can sicken and kill; and even people who do not smoke can be harmed by smoke from those who do." There can, however, be good news but only if this committee does the job that it is supposed to do and that is to recognize that unlike some public health hazards, secondhand smoke exposure is easily prevented. Smoke-free indoor environments are a proven and simple approach that prevent exposure and harm to its citizens. The report finds that even the most sophisticated ventilation systems cannot completely eliminate secondhand smoke exposure. Only a smoke-free environment affords full protection. As someone who has treated and monitored these major health problems, I am united with my medical colleagues who know that we can help the citizens of this community if we say, "Secondary smoke has to go." Mr. Mayor and City Council members, you have the opportunity and indeed the responsibility to say to us "Secondary smoke: not in this community!" Thank you for your attention.

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