THE DAILY CLIPS

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$1.2 million awarded to reduce tobacco use among NC college students

Thirty-seven N.C. colleges will participate in a $1.2 million project to reduce smoking on campuses statewide.

The N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund announced the grants as the third phase of its Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative to fight tobacco use and prevent exposure to secondhand smoke among college students.

The Guilford County Department of Health and the Mecklenburg County Department of Health was awarded $300,000 from the trust fund and East Carolina University and UNC-Wilmington were both awarded $200,000 to lead prevention projects.

Grant recipients will work on college and university campuses to prevent the initiation of tobacco use, promote tobacco use cessation and eliminate tobacco-related health disparities among college students, as well as to eliminate exposure to second hand tobacco smoke.

Phases I and II awarded more than $1.4 million to 14 institutions.

The Phase III grants were announced in March and the programs they fund are set to start July 1.

Reporter e-mail: baustin@bizjournals.com.
Robert L. Barker

EDENTON — Robert L. Barker, former state Senator representing Wake, Harnett and Lee Counties, died Tuesday, June 22, 2010, in Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville.

A real estate appraiser, Barker owned Bob Barker & Associates, Inc. with offices in Edenton and Nags Head prior to retirement in 2006. The son of the late Millard R. Barker Sr. and Mabel Gray Barker, Bob was born in Harnett County and grew up in Raleigh, attending Millbrook High School and North Carolina State University. Barker served as a special communication’s officer in the US Army, stationed at NORAD in Colorado Springs and also served in Korea and the Far East. He and his wife, the former Kaye Hollowell, resided in Edenton.

In the North Carolina General Assembly, Barker served as Chair of the Senate Committee on Insurance and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Resources. He chaired the North Carolina Dairy Industry Study Commission and co-chaired the Senate Joint Study on Governing Boards for Public Education. He is no doubt best remembered by colleagues as Senate Co-chair of the House-Senate Joint Committee on Medical Malpractice during the malpractice issues of the 1970’s. Senator Barker was appointed by Governor James B. Hunt to serve on the state’s Capitol Building Authority that planned the state government complex in downtown Raleigh and also served on North Carolina’s Bicentennial Commission and the Marine Fisheries Commission.

Bob was always grateful for the role he was able to play in the effort to establish the ECU School of Medicine. Colleagues delight in stories about Senator Barker breaking ranks with Piedmont legislators to support the work of Dr. Leo Jenkins, U.S. Senator Robert Morgan and Lieutenant Governor Hunt to get the Medical School at ECU and the expansion of Pitt Memorial, that would follow, for all of eastern North Carolina.

In statements issued this week, former U.S. Senator Robert Morgan and former Governor Jim Hunt called Barker “a great public servant.”

Of all his civic involvement in Raleigh over the years, none brought greater pleasure than his service on the Board of Directors of the Boys Club of Raleigh for many years. He was instrumental in organizing the Club in an abandoned church property and saw it grow to occupy a large facility with able staff to serve the unmet needs of young men.

In addition to his wife of thirty-two years, Barker is survived by his sons, L. Ashley Barker and wife, Christine, of Greenville and Robert H. Barker of Nags Head; and daughters Michelle B. Lewis and husband, Terry, and Melissa B. Hood and husband, Jeff, of Raleigh; and six grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, Will Barker of Raleigh; and sisters Edith Watkins of Myrtle Beach, S.C. and Carol Hannah of Pinehurst.

In addition to his parents, Barker was predeceased by brothers, M. Ray Barker, Jr. and William E. Barker; and sisters Marie B. Yow, Doris B. Southall and Judith B. Coley.

Barker was a member of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church where he formerly served on the vestry as Junior Warden. A memorial service will be held today at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Edenton at 11 a.m. The family will receive friends at the residence at 103 West Church Street. Miller Funeral Home & Crematory, Edenton, is assisting the family with arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests consideration of memorial contributions to the N.C. State Engineering Foundation for Scholarships, P.O. Box 7901, NCSU, Raleigh, N.C. 27695, or to St. Paul’s Church, 101 W. Gale Street, Edenton, N.C. 27932.

The family would like to express their appreciation for Dr. Chris Perry in Edenton, and for Dr. Heather White and the oncology staff at Pitt Memorial Hospital.

Online condolences may be made by visiting www.millerfhc.com.
Natalie J. Colston

WINTERVILLE — Ms. Natalie Jones Colston, 43, died Tuesday, June 22, 2010. A memorial service will be conducted Sunday at 2 p.m. at Oakmont Baptist Church.

Natalie was a property manager for East Carolina University students, and also worked at PirateStuff. She enjoyed spreading ECU spirit to others. Natalie also had a great love of the beach, animals and gardening.

She was predeceased by her husband, John Vaughan Colston II.

She is survived by her sons, Robert Blake Colston, of Winterville, John Vaughan Colston III, and Patrick Steele Colston, both of Greenville; mother, Glennis Edwards Jones, of Greenville; sister, Courtney Jones Van Valkenburg, of Grand Rapids, Mich.; and in-laws, Martha and Steve Glass, of Cary, and Sharon Colston, of King George, Va.

Memorials may be made to the Colston Memorial Fund, c/o State Employees Credit Union, PO Box 20429, Greenville, NC 27858.

Pack targets Debbie Yow as athletic director

Maryland athletic director Debbie Yow has emerged as the leading candidate to replace Lee Fowler as N.C. State's AD. Maryland has enjoyed considerable national success and unprecedented expansion, in terms of both facilities and the number of varsity sports, in Yow's 16-year tenure at the helm of the ACC school's athletic department.

Yow, the younger sister of the late Wolfpack basketball coaching legend, Kay Yow, confirmed in a phone interview Thursday night that she has been contacted by N.C. State.

"N.C. State has expressed interest in me, yes, but at this time that's all I can say," Yow said.

Yow told The Washington Post and The Associated Press she will be in Raleigh today to meet with N.C. State officials. Insidemdsports.com, a Maryland sports website owned by ESPN, reported that Yow has already been selected for the Wolfpack job.

Yow would not confirm, or deny, however, that she had been selected to replace Fowler, who announced his resignation on May 4. Fowler is leaving the position Wednesday after nearly 10 years at State.

"It's flattering that they have interest," Yow said on Thursday night.

Yow's late sister, Kay, was the women's basketball coach at N.C. State for 34 years. A Hall of Fame coach for the Wolfpack, Kay Yow died of cancer last year after a long, public battle.

New N.C. State chancellor Randy Woodson formed a search committee and hired an executive search firm to find Fowler's replacement. Woodson said one of his priorities was to find a candidate with AD experience.

Efforts to reach most members of the university's 13-member search committee were unsuccessful Thursday. Two members, N.C. State faculty chair Margery Overton and N.C. State faculty athletics representative Sam Pardue, declined to comment on the reports concerning Debbie Yow.

Yow, a Gibsonville native, took the Maryland AD job in 1994, leaving her AD post at Saint Louis University.

At Maryland, the Terrapins won 17 national titles in five sports under Yow, including one each in men's basketball (2002) and women's basketball (2006).

During Yow's tenure, Maryland's athletic department expanded to 27 varsity teams and saw major improvements in facilities, notably the move of the basketball programs to the Comcast Center.

Yow has enjoyed remarkable national success in non-revenue sports such as women's lacrosse (eight NCAA titles) and field hockey (five NCAA titles) during her tenure.

Still, there has been pressure on Yow from portions of the Maryland fan base for the recent performance
of the football program and a public personality clash with popular men's basketball coach Gary Williams.

Football coach Ralph Friedgen, who delivered an ACC title in 2001, has had losing records in four of the past six seasons, and both Yow and Friedgen have come under heavy pressure in College Park since a 2-10 mark in 2009.

Fowler, who will be paid $230,000 for the remainder of his contract through 2013, hired both football coach Tom O'Brien and basketball coach Sidney Lowe.

Yow's base contract with Maryland is worth $350,000 and runs through August 2013.

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New Rx for Young Doctors: Shorter Work Day

By SHIRLEY S. WANG

Amid continued concern about errors by overworked medical residents, hospitals would be forced to curtail shifts and increase supervision of some doctors-in-training under proposed new guidelines for residency programs released Wednesday.

The plan from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which certifies residency programs, goes well beyond previous efforts to limit work hours. Many patient advocates and physicians hailed it as a step in the right direction, but it would likely pose logistical and financial challenges for teaching hospitals.

Residency, the multiyear training period after doctors complete medical school and before they practice independently, is notoriously rigorous. Newly minted doctors traditionally work shifts that can last longer than a full day, with little opportunity to rest.

Medical experts and patient advocates have been concerned for years that fatigued residents were harming patients with preventable errors. One ACGME review of published studies showed that after 24 hours, clinical work performance degrades to a fraction of performance by well-rested physicians. A 2004 study found that first-year residents working an all-night shift every third night were responsible for more than half of preventable adverse events.

These worries led the ACGME in 2003 to limit resident hours to 80 hours a week. Until then, some were regularly working up to 120 hours a week, according to the council.

When the duty-hour rule was mandated, some doctors criticized the limitation as being harmful to doctors’ education and argued that cutting trainee hours would lead to less-skilled physicians. Others, including physicians and patient groups, said they didn’t go far enough in curbing residents’ hours and protecting patients.

The proposed new guidelines—published online Wednesday by the New England Journal of Medicine—are “an attempt to balance those [concerns] and to teach residents to learn their own limits,” said Thomas Nasca, chief
executive officer of the ACGME. The guidelines are now open for a 45-day public-comment period and if approved by the board in September, will go into effect in July 2011.

At the heart of the ACGME's proposed changes is the recognition that the least-experienced residents need to be treated differently than more experienced ones. The plan recommends that first-year residents be limited to 16-hour shifts, and those in the second year and above work continuously for no more than 24 hours. They can stay an additional four hours to facilitate patient handoffs to another doctor. Currently residents are allowed to work up to 30-hour shifts.

**Grueling Pace**
The tough schedules worked by doctors-in-training have prompted concern about patient safety. Click to enlarge graphic.

The guidelines also include detailed expectations about direct supervision of younger residents by more experienced ones, in the hopes that a supervising doctor would catch any error before it affects a patient, according to Dr. Nasca.

In addition, the ACGME will step up its monitoring and enforcement of the requirements, conducting on-site visits of each institution annually beginning in July 2011. The site visits are likely to cost each institution about $12,000 to $15,000, according to Dr. Nasca.

Those programs that don't comply with the rules could ultimately lose accreditation and be forced to disband.

Some doctors and patient groups see the guidelines as an improvement in addressing patient safety but question whether they go far enough, since more experienced residents also are affected by sleep deprivation. A coalition leading a campaign called Wake Up Doctor about the dangers of physician fatigue said the ACGME guidelines "fail" in comparison to more sweeping 2008 Institute of Medicine recommendations.

Edward Dunn, chief of the performance-improvement department at the Lexington VA Medical Center, said another "valid" concern was that limiting resident hours would increase the likelihood patients would be handed off between doctors for care and something could go wrong during the transition. He also said there isn't clear evidence 16-hour shifts are optimal.

Helen Haskell, president of the patient-advocacy group Mothers Against Medical Error, said 16 hours is still too long. "If residents' work load is too high, their hours are too long and they are left without sufficient supervision and backup, it's a toxic stew for patients," said Ms. Haskell, whose son died as a result of what she believes to have been a resident's medical error.

In terms of implementation, Timothy Billiar, chairman of the department of surgery at the University of Pittsburgh, said the stricter duty-hour guidelines would be a "moderate challenge" for the department.

He said his department would need to hire additional medical staff, such as physician assistants or nurse practitioners. The department had to increase staff when the 2003 guidelines were implemented as well.

But fulfilling the supervision requirements wouldn't be a problem because the department is already engaged in this level of monitoring, said Dr. Billiar. "I think they put on paper what the majority of programs already do," he said.

**Write to** Shirley S. Wang at shirley.wang@wsj.com
Senator Calls for New Rules for For-Profit Colleges

By TAMAR LEWIN

WASHINGTON — At the first in a series of oversight hearings on for-profit colleges, Senator Tom Harkin made it clear on Thursday that he saw a need for new regulation of for-profit colleges, to prevent waste of taxpayer money, and fraudulent practices that harm students.

In his report framing the issues before the committee, Mr. Harkin, an Iowa Democrat, said he was concerned that for-profit colleges received a disproportionate share of federal aid, and spent a large share of their revenues on expenses unrelated to teaching, while their students tended to borrow extensively and default more.

“I don’t think anyone who is reasonably objective about this can say that there’s nothing wrong, we don’t have to do anything,” said Mr. Harkin, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Fueled by federal student aid, the for-profit sector has mushroomed. While overall post-secondary enrollment increased 31 percent from 1998 to 2008, the for-profits’ enrollment grew by 225 percent. Although they account for less than 10 percent of students, the for-profit colleges get almost a quarter of the federal student aid. In 2008-9, they got $4.3 billion in Pell grants and $19.6 billion in Stafford loans.

According to the report released Thursday morning, the 14 publicly traded education companies have combined enrollment of 1.4 million students. The largest, the University of Phoenix, has 458,000 students, more than the undergraduate enrollment of the entire Big Ten conference schools. At least seven of the publicly traded for-profit colleges have most of their students enrolled exclusively in online programs. And, the report said, they have some of the highest operating profit margins among companies on the stock exchange.

Mr. Harkin’s panel heard from five witnesses — four of them testifying to abuses in for-profit
higher education, and one representative of a for-profit college.

One witness, Steven Eisman, a hedge-fund manager known for predicting the housing market crash, compared the for-profit colleges to the subprime mortgage industry, describing them as “marketing machines masquerading as universities.” Mr. Eisman told the committee that about half of all for-profit students dropped out.

On the eve of the hearings, Harris N. Miller, the head of the Career College Association, which represents the for-profit schools, questioned the inclusion of Mr. Eisman as a witness. He said Mr. Eisman was not an unbiased observer but a trader who would profit from any decline in the stock of the proprietary colleges.

Mr. Harkin expressed frustration with some information gaps regarding for-profit colleges — particularly what happens to the students. According to his report, which did not single out schools by name, one school started with 62,000 students and enrolled 117,000 new ones — but ended the year with an enrollment of 86,000.

Mr. Eisman said that, generally, such numbers reflected the enormous number of dropouts. But Mr. Harkin said the committee had had trouble finding good data on dropout rates.

“We don’t know how many students graduate, how many get jobs, how schools that are not publicly traded spend their Title IV dollars, and how many for-profit students default over the long term,” Mr. Harkin said. “More broadly, we don’t know exactly what risk we are taking by investing an increasing share of our federal financial aid dollars in this sector.”

Republicans, however, advised caution in moving too broadly against for-profit colleges.

“It is essential that we use a scalpel and not a machete,” said Senator Michael B. Enzi of Wyoming, the ranking Republican on the committee, who said he was “disappointed” that Republicans had been left out of the process of arranging the hearings.

The lone for-profit representative, Sharon Thomas Parrott, chief compliance officer of DeVry, described how colleges like hers could help the nation meet its goal of a more educated work force, and said that, since the 1970s, 90 percent of DeVry graduates had gotten jobs related to their education.

At the hearing, Kathleen Tighe, the inspector general of the federal Department of Education, said that although the for-profit colleges enrolled not quite 10 percent of the nation’s postsecondary students, they accounted for 70 percent of the department’s current criminal investigations.
Ms. Tighe identified several “recurring areas of fraud and abuse,” like falsification of students’ eligibility for federal aid or receiving federal aid for online students who never participate in any classes or assignments.

Another witness, Margaret Reiter, a former California prosecutor, described decades of abuses by for-profit colleges.

The committee also heard testimony from Yasmine Issa, who, as a 24-year-old, divorced mother of twins, enrolled in a $32,000 course at Sanford-Brown Institute in White Plains, to learn to be an ultrasound technician. After she completed the program in 2008, Ms. Issa learned that she could not get a job because the program was not accredited by the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography. Now she is carrying more than $21,000 in debt, which, the committee noted, cannot be discharged in bankruptcy.