THE DAILY CLIPS

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East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
ECU honored for outreach

- ECU is one of only 195 institutions in the country to be recognized for community engagement by the Carnegie Foundation.

**The Daily Reflector**

East Carolina University and seven other UNC system schools were recognized nationally Thursday for community outreach and engagement achievements.

ECU is one of only 195 institutions in the country to be recognized for community engagement by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advance

ment of Teaching.

The foundation, which makes assessments of colleges and universities, has announced that 119 campuses received the engaged distinc

tion for 2008, joining 76 that were identified in 2006.

The other University of North Carolina campuses include Appalachian State University, North Carolina Central University, UNC-

Charlotte, UNC-Greensboro, UNC-Wilmington, UNC-Pembroke and Western Carolina University. Those campuses join North Carolina State University and UNC-Chapel Hill that received the designation in 2006.

With the announcement, the proportion of North Carolina's public universities deemed by the Carnegie Foundation to be "community engaged" far exceeds that of peer state systems across the country including California, Texas and Wisconsin, according to the UNC system administration.

"Receiving this classification confirms what we at ECU already know — that the commitment and practice of engagement are woven through-

out our teaching, research,

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ECU

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service and outreach enter-

prises," said ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard. "This is our history and a core strength as we pursue our mission to serve as a national model for public service and regional transforma-

tion."

ECU's application effort for the distinction was headed up by Deirdre Magee, vice chancellor for research and graduate studies.

"We tried to reflect the breadth and depth of our commitment to our community, region, state and nation," Magee said.

Community engagement is a collaboration between a university and its communities in mutually beneficial partnerships that respond to community needs by sharing skills, knowledge and resources, she said.

The UNC administration points to the UNC Tomorrow initiative as a driving force behind receiving this national recognition. Through the initiative all UNC campuses are seeking to increase their outreach and responsiveness to their surrounding communities and the state as a whole.

"In order for UNC to be the most engaged University in America, our campuses must continue to be responsive and valuable partners in solving real problems," said Leslie Boney, UNC associate vice president for economic development research, policy and planning.

"The fact that over half of North Carolina's public universities have been nationally recognized for their commitment to working with communities sends a strong message for the future of our state."

Cont...
ECU ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Deirdre Mageean, vice chancellor for research and graduate studies at ECU, cited four projects that show engagement at East Carolina University:

ARISE

ARISE, or “A Real Integrated Sports Experience,” provides community members, ECU students, faculty, staff and alumni with and without disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of unique sports, fitness and recreational activities—all modified specifically for individuals with disabilities. The partnership between community members and individuals from Campus Recreation & Wellness, Adapted Physical Education, Recreational Therapy and Allied Health allows participants to exercise in a supportive environment that meets their needs.

Wounded Warrior Battalion East

East Carolina University’s Psychophysiology Lab and Biofeedback Clinic is assisting Marines of the Wounded Warrior Battalion East at Camp Lejeune in returning to civilian life. The Training for Optimal Performance, or TOP program, was implemented in February to provide a continuum of services for Marines returning from war with the ultimate goal of assisting them in adjusting to their disabilities and/or help them transition to civilian life.

Tillery Wellness Program

This innovative, community-built wellness program is a testament to a successful 10-year collaboration between ECU Occupational Therapy faculty and students and residents of Tillery, a community in Halifax County. This model of ECU partnerships with communities focuses on implementation and evaluation of health services and resulted in the identification of best practices for community-driven health services.

Sustainable Tourism Outreach

A partnership between the Office of Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development, the Center for Sustainable Tourism and the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development hopes to find practical and applicable solutions to industry problems created by rising energy prices and adverse weather and climate patterns, as well as other obstacles by implementing sustainable practices.
Trustees OK lease on physicians’ building

The building housed the Eastern Neurosurgical and Spine Associates office which merged with ECU Physicians.

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

The East Carolina University Board of Trustees approved a lease agreement for a building on the corner of Arlington Boulevard and Stantonsburg Road.

The building housed the Eastern Neurosurgical and Spine Associates office. The office recently merged with ECU Physicians and the doctors at the location will become clinical faculty members of ECU, said ECU spokesman John Durham.

The 19,866-square-foot building will be leased for $19 per square foot. The first year of the 10-year agreement will cost more than $375,000 and price increases will be allowed after the first year. ECU Physicians also will pay an $80,000 up-fit charge and janitor and utility expenses.

ECU Physicians merged with Eastern Neurosurgical and Spine Associates as part of the ECU Physicians practice plan that will allow ECU Physicians to offer services that were previously unavailable to its patients.
Pitt generosity

Laurels — To all those in this community who have found a way to give to those in need, despite the slumping economy. Charitable organizations are more important than ever this holiday season, with so many facing the perils of financial uncertainty, and many have reported that donations continue to pour in despite the economic turmoil. Please consider helping in whatever way possible.

On the rooftop

Laurels — To the Christmas holiday, a favorite of children and adults alike. Last-minute shopping begins in earnest this week as the hours tick away before the big day on Thursday. And while the wrappings and presents are fun, the meaningful moments are found with family and friends gathered together in celebration.

Laurels — To the start of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights that begins at sundown on Sunday. While it may not be the most important date on the Jewish calendar, it does hold a special place of significance as it commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Its celebration, with the familiar lighting of the menorah, contributes to making this holiday season a very special time of year.

Darts — To the congestion along highways and in airports expected this week as people travel for the holidays. Millions will indulge in a five-day weekend covering Christmas Eve, making for slower movement on North Carolina roadways and for longer lines and lengthy waits at the state’s airports. Remember this is the season for good cheer, so try to keep your spirits up when traveling.

Laurels — To the first testing required for the eventual installation of an outdoor notification system at East Carolina University. The system is intended to keep students, faculty and staff safe in the case of emergency by using loudspeakers across campus to provide information. While one hopes such a system will never be needed, it will be a valuable resource for the school.

Darts — To the unseasonably high temperatures that have done little to inspire thoughts of Christmas lately. Pitt County, like most of the Southeast, has recorded balmy temperatures more in line with spring than winter in recent weeks. That does not seem to parse with sleigh bells and dreams of a winter wonderland. Would a cold snap really be too much to hope for?

Laurels — To the soon-to-be-opened Craig Goess Student Center at Pitt Community College, a welcome addition for the school and a facility long awaited by students. The new building will house a number of administration departments, and will offer a focus for the growing campus as it serves an ever-increasing number of students.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 252-329-8507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
N.C. needs to prepare for changing climate, ECU report states

North Carolina is at risk from rising sea levels and the potential increase in frequency and severity of tropical storms and hurricanes, the report states.

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

Climate change is a reality that North Carolina needs to prepare for, according to a recent report produced at East Carolina University.

"Global Warming and Coastal North Carolina," which includes the work of more than 25 faculty members, describes how climate change is affecting the coast, how it may continue to affect the coast and what the state can do to get ready for it.

The report was prepared at the request of North Carolina Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight through Erskine Bowles, president of the University of North Carolina's 16-campus system.

Basnight wrote to Bowles in July to request that the universities in the system research and submit a report on global warming, including its cause, the timetable of expected effects or results and what the state should do about it.

The effort at ECU was headed by Stephen Culver, chair of ECU's geology department.

Culver recognizes the political nature of the topic but says that climate change is happening, whether its acknowledged or not, and the state needs to do something about it.

"We shouldn't get into an argument about why it's happening," he said. "It is happening. Sea levels are rising. So what are we going to do about it?"

Aside from the document that will be submitted to Bowles and ultimately Basnight, ECU has also had a hand in producing two other reports on climate change: "North Carolina's Coast in Crisis: A Vision for the Future" and "Shoreline Change Within the Albermarle-Pamlico Estuarine System, North Carolina."

"We are trying to get the word out — the science out — so that decision makers are fully informed when they make decisions," Culver said.

Culver said that federal funds for the kind of research is hard to come by and more state dollars will be needed in the future to ensure that the coast is well guarded.

"Right now we have to put the problems out there and begin to discuss how to address them," he said.

Key findings of the report to Basnight state that global warming is a reality and is driven in large measure by the burning of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases.

The report states that compelling evidence to support these conclusions comes from scientific observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of glacial ice and rising global sea level.

North Carolina is at risk from rising sea levels and the potential increase in fre-
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quency and severity of tropical storms and hurricanes, the report states.

Barrier islands face the potential of collapse, especially on the Outer Banks. Low-lying land on the coast also will be susceptible to rising sea level.

"The big challenge for North Carolina is to anticipate and plan for events with potentially massive economic and social impacts, but which remain poorly understood in terms of complexity, timing, causality, frequency and probability," the report states.

"Despite these daunting uncertainties, inaction is not an option."

The report recommends the creation of a commission on adaptation to climate changes that would review initiatives of other coastal states and study the costs and benefits of responding to climate change in North Carolina.

A study on the socio-economic impact of rising sea levels is also called for in the report along with sustained research funding on climate change and the coast.

"We don't have any easy smart answers, we just want people to know how the coast works," Culver said.

"Politicians make the decisions within a political context."

The report will be submitted along with reports from other North Carolina universities to the UNC system administration and ultimately to Basnight and other legislatures in Raleigh.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9565.

REPORT

Other recommendations made in the report include:

- Increase support to the North Carolina Sea Grant Program, and complementary university outreach programs, to provide practical climate change adaptation information to government, business, industry and citizens.
- Establish a network of university research centers to address issues associated with climate change and adaptation; accelerate center development by establishing a program of distinguished professorships in these fields.
- Design incentives for UNC faculty to conduct research that advances knowledge and contributes to the information needs of decision makers and citizens.

Something to say? Post your comment about this story online at reflector.com
Correspondence, manuscripts and artwork by acclaimed North Carolina-born poet A.R. Ammons are on public display for the first time as part of an exhibit about his work at J.Y. Joyner Library. 

"A.R. Ammons' Poetry and Art: A Documentary Exhibit" continues through June 30.

For the display, the Special Collections Department cataloged the Ammons works that were donated in early 2007 by Susan and Reid Overcash of Raleigh, establishing the Overcash-Wright Literary Collection at East Carolina University. Reid Overcash, who graduated from ECU in 1973, is a member of the ECU Board of Visitors.

Jonathan Dembo, special collections curator, was responsible for choosing which of the 713 pieces of Ammons' artifacts would be included in the exhibit. He built the exhibit around an essay by Roger Gilbert, "Footprints from a Poet's Path: The A.R. Ammons Collection at East Carolina University," which is included in the exhibit catalog.

Gilbert is professor of English at Cornell University, where he taught with Ammons for years. He was also a friend of Ammons and is working on a book of Ammons' life and work.

"In order to help viewers understand and appreciate the materials in this exhibit," Dembo said, "an exhibit catalog includes thumbnail illustrations and brief descriptions of almost every item in the exhibit." The only exceptions are sound recordings, which are available at the Search Desk during exhibit hours.

"I tried in a limited way to show as many aspects of Ammons' life as I could in the scope of a relatively small exhibit," Dembo said.

Included in the exhibit are eight watercolors painted by Ammons. Gilbert estimates that Ammons painted approximately 1,000 watercolors in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

"He used watercolors in combination with his poetry," Dembo said. "He would write a poem in longhand and then he would illustrate it." The exhibit contains a striking example of this approach and a poem that he typed on adding machine tape.

The exhibit also includes one of Ammons' notebooks. In total, Ammons filled five notebooks with poems, observations and phrases that he jotted down between 1952 and 1975. ECU's collection has three of these notebooks.

Even though he is one of America's most famous poets in literary circles, many North Carolinians might not even recognize Ammons' name. A native of Whiteville, Ammons was born in 1926 and graduated from Wake Forest College. His first book of poetry was published in 1955.

When he died at age 75 in 2001, Ammons was Cornell University's Goldwin Smith Professor of Poetry emeritus and had won virtually every major prize for poetry in the United States, including two National Book Awards - one in 1973 for "Collected Poems, 1951-1971" and another in 1993 for "Garbage."

The Overcash-Wright Literary Collection focuses on Ammons' early life in North Carolina, his education at Wake Forest College and the first 30 years of his career, Dembo said. The archive at Cornell houses materials from the last two decades of his life and work.

Tar River Poetry, ECU's poetry journal, has included a previously unpublished poem by Ammons in its 30th anniversary edition (Fall 2008).

For more information, visit http://www.ecu.edu/cs-lib/spcoll/index.cfm.
Smoking restrictions on health sciences campus

Smoking on the health sciences campus at ECU will be limited to two smoking areas, and only ECU employees and students may smoke beginning Jan. 1.

This change moves smoking areas away from the Brody Medical Sciences Building and prohibits smoking by patients and visitors. The new smoking areas are a pair of gazebos near the retention pond on the health sciences campus.

The goal is to create a uniform smoke-free environment on the health sciences campus. Until now, smoking was allowed in several areas near the Brody Medical Sciences Building where smoke could waft into the entrances of patient-care areas.

In 2007, the N.C. General Assembly passed a law that enabled ECU to ban smoking around its buildings up to a distance of 100 feet. That law gave the Health Sciences Division, including the School of Medicine and Medical Faculty Practice Plan, authority to ban smoking at its buildings, grounds and walkways.

Music therapy hosts autism program

The ECU Music Therapy program hosted a class of students with autism from South Central High School for three monthly visits to the School of Music this fall.

Students in the class taught by Aimee Zavala at SCHS have participated in singing, instrumental and rhythmic music, and music movement activities designed to encourage communication, successful participation, self-expression, motor skills and talent development.

ECU students in the Music Therapy Program who led the group included Nicole Hunter, Lakeshia Johnson, Kelly Kinsland, Rongzhi Li, Allison Priesing, Yuii Taniguchi and Jasmine Williams. Barbara Memory and Michelle Hairston are faculty in the music therapy program.

ECU achieves top scores on CPA exam

Graduate students in ECU's accounting program have again earned top scores on the Uniform Certified Public Accounting (CPA) Examination.

According to results compiled by the National Association of State Boards of Accounting for the 2007 exam, the most recent scores available, ECU graduate students achieved a passing rate of 54.55 percent—ranking it 16th in the nation among all candidates with advanced degrees.

Ninety four ECU candidates took the 2007 CPA Exam.

Students in ECU's accounting program have a tradition of earning top scores on the CPA Exam.

In 2005, ECU finished 25th for candidates with advanced degrees.
Pirate wide receiver Taylor finds it's often better to give than to receive

BY NATHAN SUMMERS
The Daily Reflector

There was a time when Skip Holtz probably thought he had to keep an eye on Alex Taylor.

Not long after Taylor arrived on the East Carolina football scene as a freshman wide receiver in 2005, he started asking Holtz if he could be excused a little early from a few practices and meetings, or maybe even show up late here and there.

Would it be a problem?

In almost every other instance in the Holtz football framework at ECU, it would most certainly be a problem.

But it became pretty clear pretty soon that Taylor, now one of the Pirates’ lead receivers as a junior, wasn’t trying to pull a fast one on his head coach.

Instead, he was doing things like pulling down drywall and ramming down rows of bricks. Other times, he was hosting black tie events on campus or attending parties at local middle schools.

While the Hawaiian-born Taylor has gotten a lot better at catching passes since being recruited out of Greensboro’s Southwest Guilford High School, he’s also learned to spend every minute of his free time — and a few of Holtz’s too — trying to make the world around him happier.

That includes regular involvement in Habitat for Humanity and other community projects and mentoring kids whenever and wherever he’s given a chance.

“Every day, he says, ‘I’ve got to go to a student organization meeting,’ and, ‘Coach, I’ve got to do this reception so I’ll miss the evening meeting,’” Holtz said of Taylor. “You go over to the Murphy Center and he’s over there in a coat and tie greeting people.”

Early in the football season, Taylor See TAYLOR, C8

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showered Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium in joy the way most football players do — he leapt into the air and reeled in a second-quarter touchdown that proved massive in a 24-3 hammering of No. 8 West Virginia.

But Taylor pours every bit as much effort into wielding a hammer to help build better neighborhoods, interacting with kids and even encouraging his teammates to start doing the same.

“I’ve just always felt that I’m in a great situation,” Taylor said. “Just to get out and help people as much as you can and brighten up somebody’s day is a plus. I’m grateful. I get to play at a Division I school, I’m on scholarship and can’t ask for anything more. I want to give back as much as I can.”
Dating back to Taylor’s freshman year, that’s meant making appearances at Elmhurst Elementary School, the C.M. Eppes Halloween Party, Read Across America Day, the ECU Letterwinners Weekend, the ECU Special Pops Christmas dance and work with the REAL Crisis Center, the SAAC and Special Olympics.

As acrobatic as his play can be on the field, it’s nothing compared to the juggling act he does everywhere else.

But to hear Taylor tell it, there is plenty of time to do plenty more things. While he’s a junior on his team’s football roster, Taylor is a senior in ECU’s communication program, and somehow, that seems to free him up even more.

“I’ve got a little extra time since I’m a senior and I have less classes, I have a little extra time to do that kind of stuff,” said 6-foot-4 Taylor, who was also recruited as a Division I basketball player.

The volunteer in Taylor began to emerge in high school, when he said he worked at a lot of kids’ sports camps at Southwest Guilford.

It’s grown so much since then, Taylor doesn’t know what might be next.

Thanks to the gardening wisdom of his mother, Taylor said he originally pulled landscaping detail while working with Habitat for Humanity.

But it hasn’t ended there.

“I got to smash out some bricks with a sledgehammer, about three or four layers of them, so that was a lot of fun,” Taylor said. “And being able to put up a deck? I’ve never put a deck on someone’s house before.”

As a football player, Taylor’s full impact is yet to be made, and he seems to understand that, saying he’s far from a finished product.

Injuries helped to pave Taylor’s way into a starting role this season, but Taylor hopes his play will keep him a starter the rest of his career. Perhaps it will take learning how to play at the same pace he lives the rest of his life.

“There is so much more I have to fix, little things I need to get corrected to become a better player, but it’s stepped up since the beginning of the season,” said Taylor, who has 23 receptions for 310 yards this season. “I can be a better route-runner, make better blocks, read the defense faster. I want to be able to play full-speed all the time.”

As a person, Taylor is striving for similar perfection.

Although he’ll undoubtedly see wide receivers with more prolific statistics pass through his program at ECU, Holtz knows it will be tough to find a player of more solid character than Taylor.

“He’s a great young man and he’s really grown up, not only on the field but off the field,” Holtz said. “He’s really come out of his shell. He’s an active person and he’ll be successful in life, there’s no doubt in my mind about that.”

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@coxnc.com or (252)329-9595.
ECU School of Music
to do research study

The study will examine the effects of three new music programs — piano instruction, music appreciation, and percussion ensemble — on successful aging in adults.

The Daily Reflector

The East Carolina University School of Music is partnering with the Pitt County Council on Aging in seeking individuals age 60 and over for a compensated research study on music instruction and successful aging.

The study, funded by the Retirement Research Foundation, will examine the effects of three new music programs — piano instruction, music appreciation, and percussion ensemble — on successful aging in adults. Participants will be compensated for program participation, and all program materials are provided. Each class will meet once each week for 16 weeks.

Participants must be 60-85 years of age, native English speakers and have no neurological disorders or difficulty in hand movement. Participants will complete a series of cognitive and musical tests. In addition to the free instruction, all participants who complete the research will receive a one-time stipend of $70.

The purpose of this project is to develop a model music program that promotes successful aging through enhancement of bimanual coordination, lifelong learning, individual creativity, self-efficacy and social skills.

For more information, contact Dr. Jennifer Bugos, ECU School of Music, at 328-5721 or at bugosj@ecu.edu.
Public Forum

Number of cemetery graves underestimated

When I read a recent article in the Reflector about the graveyards at McGregor Downs Road, which would have to be moved to make way for the dental school, I wanted to help make sure that all the names of the people buried out there were identified.

The article said there were 43 bodies. At the time only 14 were identified. I found seven more names and supplied them to Scott Buck over at ECU.

I have found now that there were not only two or three family cemeteries with mostly children, but there also was a full church cemetery called Allen Chapel Cemetery as well.

My understanding is that there have now been at least 70 bodies dug up at that site. After doing some further research, I have determined that it would be difficult but not impossible to identify the majority of the bodies.

My question to ECU and the City Council is what do you plan to do now? Also, how could the number of graves at that site have been so underestimated?

GARY DAVIS
Greenville
Drs. Michael P. Coyle and James R. Powell have joined the Department of Internal Medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Coyle has a medical degree from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, and completed residency at Wright State-affiliated hospitals.

Coyle is board-certified in internal medicine and pediatrics. His primary medical interests are preventive medicine for adults and children, cardiovascular risk identification and management including stress testing, hypertension, diabetes, performing minor surgical procedures and management of certain joint conditions including cortisone injections.

Coyle sees adult patients at Moye Medical Center and children and adolescents at the ECU Adult and Pediatric Health Care practice.

Powell has a medical degree from Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Va., and completed residency in internal medicine at Brody School of Medicine, where he served as chief resident.

Powell is board-certified in internal medicine. His primary medical interests are chronic disease management and peri-operative management.

Powell sees patients at Moye Medical Center on Moye Boulevard across from the Brody School of Medicine.
REAL MONEY

When C.D. Spangler Jr. served as president of the University of North Carolina system from 1986 to 1997, he donated his president's salary to the 16 campuses of the system. Last week, he went to the office he once occupied to give current UNC System President Erskine Bowles a $10 million check from a foundation he runs to go to the university system. Spangler's foundation has pledged $20 million over five years pending a legislative grant. Over many years now, Spangler and his family have been most generous to many worthy causes.

The Charlotte businessman demonstrated an interest in public education long before he took over the UNC job, succeeding the legendary William Friday. Spangler had been chairman of the State Board of Education.

While at Chapel Hill, he often ate lunch with students in the dining halls and argued for low tuition rates and for other policies that would open the university's doors to a diverse student body. His was a steady hand at the helm.

One impressive thing about his latest gift is that it is just that — only the latest.
THIS WEEK

CHANCELLOR GOES A-CAROLING

UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp may have to sing for his supper when it comes to appealing for state funds. Today, he'll be singing for another cause — the Salvation Army. Thorp and his brother Clay followed their parents' lead in joining a group that goes house to house on Fayetteville's Skye Drive every Christmas. They sing carols in the affluent neighborhood in exchange for donations. They're called the Skye Drive Gang.
Blue Cross, Zagat to rank doctors

But the ratings will be based on nonmedical factors, and some question insurance link.

BY ALAN M. WOLF
STAFF WRITER

Blue Cross and Blue Shield is teaming up with Zagat dining guide to provide doctor rankings for its members.

The state’s largest health insurer, which covers more than 7.7 million people, will announce its online rating service today.

Zagat will collect and compile survey information on physicians from Blue Cross members using a 30-point scale on four criteria: trust, communication, availability and office environment. There will also be a comments section.

The move is the latest in a push by insurers, regulators and consumers to provide more data and transparency in the nation’s health-care system.

Already, patients can find a wealth of doctor data and recommendations online, although some of that information can be biased or unreliable. The N.C. Hospital Association started posting comparisons online last year.

Zagat, known for its guides to restaurants, hotels and more, started rating doctors last fall for WellPoint, which runs Blue Cross plans in 14 states including California, New York and Georgia.

“We could have done this ourselves, but it’s one of the world’s most trusted sources of information about where to eat, where to stay,” said Don Bradley, chief medical officer for Blue Cross of North Carolina. “Their reputation and methodology were extremely important in why we chose to work with them.”

Bradley, left, said Zagat is one of world’s most trusted sources. Seligson, right, notes potential for misuse or misinterpretation.

This really comes from our members’ request for more information,” he added. “Some physicians will change the way they do business and improve their service.”

But critics question whether providing limited information on doctors’ personalities and other nonmedical factors will really help consumers. And some wonder whether information provided by insurers seeking to control costs will be prejudiced.

“Consumers have a right to know about their doctors, period,” said Robert Seligson, CEO of the N.C. Medical Society. But “any time data is available, there’s potential for it to be misused or misinterpreted. The information needs to be accurate and reliable.”

With the Zagat ratings, Blue Cross members won’t find any data on a North Carolina physician until there are at least 10 surveys on the doctor, to help avoid skewed data, Bradley said. And comments will be screened to eliminate anything inappropriate.

As more health-care information becomes available to consumers, medical education and experience, malpractice histories and other factors should weigh more heavily for consumers, said Shana Becker, staff attorney with N.C. Public Interest Research Group, a nonprofit watchdog group.

“It sounds like a good start, but we need to do more evaluation of doctors’ performance and hospital safety,” she said.

One potential problem with efforts like the Zagat guide is the potential for competitors to submit negative reviews of a rival physician, said Jerry C. Bernstein, 15 doctors with Raleigh Pediatric Associates. “The Internet has been great, but any fool can post anything.”

At one point, a group of parents of home-schooled children gave Bernstein’s practice generally good marks online. But the group pointed out that “if you can get past the look of the building, the doctors are great,” Bernstein said. “It certainly hastened our move to new offices.

alan.wolf@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4572