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Health & Wellness

Resources & Lifestyle Tips

Empowerment Resource Center on the frontlines to combat STDs

The Empowerment Resource Center, a nonprofit in Atlanta, is expanding its services to provide screenings to more young women for sexually transmitted diseases, thanks to a grant awarded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

ERC expects about 350 women will benefit from its Reproductive Health Initiative, which provides testing and counseling for chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis to women ages 15-25 on a sliding scale basis. The program began serving women this month.

"The rate of women testing positive for STDs is increasing. This grant is critical because now we can reach women who not only can't afford testing but for those who test positive, we can offer them the support system they will need in going through something as delicate as this," said program coordinator Lydie Marc.

The foundation will provide screening and treatment services for the Atlanta metro area, with a priority on young African-American women and their partners. The grant puts a special focus on African American women because they have the most cases in several STDs.

In national comparisons, Georgia ranked second in primary and secondary syphilis, sixth in gonorrhea, and 13th in chlamydia cases. Gonorrhea infection rates in Georgia were 30 times higher in African-Americans than in Caucasians. Chlamydia infection rates are highest in 15- to 19-year olds and individuals in their early twenties.



Chlamydia infection rates in females were three times higher than in males.

"ERC has an established reputation of providing high-quality and effective prevention and treatment programs and services, and assisting individuals in navigating through the maze of privacy

concerns, fear, and stigma to access care linkages and other resources," said Marc. "The Elton John AIDS Fund (EJAF) is an international leader and non-profit organization funding direct patient care services and

AIDS/STD prevention, as well as education on the disease. We are very grateful that they saw something in us to provide us with a grant."

The Empowerment Resource Center is a community-based organization that provides health-related programs and services across the state of Georgia, with a priority focus on women.

The health center, which was founded in 2003, is also gearing up to offer free HIV/AIDS testing and awareness on Feb. 7 to commemorate National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

"Uninsured and underinsured women who are already battered by the current economic climate and struggling with more pressing life issues tend to forgo these vital screenings," said Jacqueline Brown, the center's executive director. "The Elton John AIDS Foundation grant is just the boost that we needed to continue to provide low-cost health care services to low-income women and their partners. The Reproductive Health Initiative will allow young women to detect preventable infections, reduce infertility, cervical abnormalities and deaths and lead them to better health outcomes."

ERC is located at 236 Auburn Ave., N.E., Suite 200, Atlanta. For appointments and more information on the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, call 404-526-1145 or 404-526-1148.

CALENDAR

DeKalb Medical forums: breast health, knee pain

DeKalb Medical will host a discussion on breast health on Jan. 19, 6 to 7 p.m., at the Hillandale campus, 2801 DeKalb Medical Parkway, Lithonia.

Dr. Yara Robertson, M.D. will lead the discussion with an overview of the most important steps that can be taken to ensure early detection of breast problems. Innovative treatments for a wide range of breast health issues will be discussed.

The forum will be held in the hospital's community room. The session is free to attend. For more information or to register, call 404-501-WELL.

DeKalb Medical will host a discussion on knee pain on Jan. 26, 6 - 7 p.m., in the hospital's theatre, 2701 North Decatur Road, Decatur.

Jeff Traub, M.D., a DeKalb Medical orthopedic surgeon, will lead the discussion about the latest advances in the treatment of knee conditions and pain, and knee replacements. A complimentary tour of the hospital's Joint Solutions Center will take place from 5 to 6 p.m. People wishing to tour the Joint Solutions Center should meet in the theatre at 5 p.m.

There is no cost to attend. For more information or to register, call 404-501-TALK.



Jeff Traub, M.D.

Discover your inner-self with yoga class

The Atlanta Yoga Club will host a workshop focusing on inner spiritual and physical health on Jan. 21, 10 a.m., at Piedmont Park, in downtown Atlanta.

This class will feature a mix of Ashtanga and Vinyasa yoga taught by Atlanta Yoga Club certified instructors. Vinyasa yoga uses a sequence of breath-synchronized movements to transition between sustained postures. The class focuses on flowing movements in conjunction with deep breathing to purify the body.

The cost of the class is \$5 per person. For more information or to register, call 1-866-746-2726 or visit www.yogaclub.us.

Rockdale Medical offers smoking cessation course

Rockdale Medical Center, 1412 Milstead Ave., Conyers, is offering a free smoking cessation course. The four sessions will be held Feb. 4, 11, 18 and 25 from 6 to 7 p.m.

The class, developed by the American Cancer Society, helps participants set weekly goals toward quitting and offers the support and encouragement of others who are striving to quit.

The fee for the course is \$25, which will be returned at the completion of the four classes. For more information or to register, call 770-918-3414.

Men's cancer support group to meet at Piedmont

Piedmont Healthcare's Cancer Center, 1800 Howell Mill Road, Suite 700, Atlanta, will offer men recovering from cancer "A Guy's Group" support meeting on Jan. 23, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

The group is open to men at any stage of recovery from cancer. Both, patients and survivors, are welcome to attend.

The meeting will include eating tips and is facilitated by Dennis Buttimer, M.Ed., and Chef Hans Rueffert. For the past 28 years, Dr. Buttimer has specialized in anxiety, depression, stress relief and offering support. He also helps clients with career issues, life transitions, grief, trauma, sexual abuse and addictions. Chef Rueffert is a gastric cancer survivor who has competed on the Food Network's Next Food Network Star and works to see men eat healthier.

The session is free to attend. For more information or to register, call 404-425-7925.



Dennis Buttimer, M.Ed.

Chef Hans Rueffert



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