

HEALTH

The Portland Observer



Howard University and Africare have joined together in an effort to send a team of health workers and a social worker to help the people of Rwanda. Standing (right to left) are: Dr. Jean Linzau, dean of the College Howard University physician; Dr. Geraldine Brown, a member of the Howard College of Nursing; and senior nursing students Dominique Pierre and Ann Rall (left). Dr. Dorothy Powell (second from left) participated in the ceremony. Senior nursing students Marie-Paul Philogene will also go on the mission.

Cancer Center Awarded \$100,000 For Research On Breast Cancer

The "1994 National Race for the Cure," in cooperation with the Susan G. Komen Foundation, has awarded the Howard University Cancer Center a \$100,000 grant for continuing a genetic study of African-American women and their female relatives aimed at identifying high-risk relatives of breast cancer patients.

Dr. Alfred L. Goldson, professor and chairman of the Howard University department of radiotherapy, is principal investigator of the project.

Since 1990, more than 200 rela-

tives have been screened, offered mammograms where appropriate, and they have been provided educational information as a result of the program.

The grant will support Goldson's ongoing research on breast cancer, with emphasis on testing for genetic hypotheses and risk factors in African-American women.

The 1994 National Race for the Cure is the largest 5K race in the world. This year over 20,000 people ran, walked or wheeled in the effort to raise public awareness about the importance of early detection and

mammography in the fight against breast cancer.

Since 1990 more than 70,000 people have supported the Washington race and helped to raise more than \$3.1 million to fund research in the local community and support the national research programs of the Susan G. Komen Breast Foundation.

With the support of National Race for the Cure grants, local hospital screening, research and education programs are helping to reach a large underserved population.

Nordstrom, Packouz Jewelers, Columbia Machine and Key Bank.

Local retailers such as Payless, Nordstrom, Emporium, Made in Oregon and Import Plaza will be selling "Cards for Kids." A box of 25 cards will sell for \$20. For more information on how you can order cards or for personal imprinting, call the Doernbecher foundation at 203-7718. Outside Portland, call 1-800-800-9583.

Reynolds And Reynolds Purchases PD Medical Systems

The Reynolds and Reynolds Company announced that it has completed the purchase of assets of privately owned PD Medical Systems of Portland, Ore. Formerly Poorman-Douglas Corp., PD Medical Systems is a provider of information management systems for office-based physicians. The company has annual sales of approximately \$8 million. The purchase price was not disclosed.

"The acquisition of PD Medical Systems is an important part of our strategy to aggressively grow our medical systems business," said David Holmes, chairman, president and CEO of The Reynolds and Reynolds Company. "PD Medical Systems is a very successful company with an excellent reputation for customer satisfaction. Their system has the industry's leading, most complete managed care capabilities. Managed care is undergoing rapid growth throughout the country and represents the future of healthcare delivery. PD Medical Systems complements our own strength in healthcare systems. The broadened capabilities we've created by integrating PD business with our own NMC Services medical systems subsidiary establishes us as a leading provider of information systems to

the healthcare market, including office- and hospital-based groups, service bureaus and the fast emerging integrated healthcare delivery networks."

PD Medical Systems and NMC Services will be merged to become Reynolds and Reynolds Healthcare Systems, a newly formed business group to be headquartered in Dayton, Ohio.

Joe Bausman, president of Reynolds' Computer Systems Division, said Reynolds will maintain op-

erations in Portland and San Diego. "Our goal is to continue to drive higher levels of customer satisfaction and aggressively grow our position in the healthcare industry. The talented and knowledgeable people we have in Portland and San Diego will enable us to drive the business forward."

"The integration of our business with Reynolds is a very positive move for PD Medical Systems and our customers," said John Douglas, president of PD Medical Systems. "The resources and skills required to

Book Profiles Black Pioneers In Medicine

"African-American Medical Pioneers," a first-of-its-kind collection of personal stories, photographs and historical data of the black men and women who opened the doors in academic and organized medicine, is now available from Betz Publishing Co. at an introductory price.

"This long-awaited book is a true inspiration," said Elizabeth Angel, publisher. "The remarkable achievements of these pioneers stand as a reminder of the important role that African-Americans have played in helping to shape the future of all health professions."

Charles H. Epps, Jr., dean of the Howard University College of Medicine, wrote the collection with co-authors Audrey L. Vaughan, university public information officer and Davis G. Johnson of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

The book includes photographs and biographical sketches of 33 medical pioneers. Biographies are primarily based upon actual interviews with the 31 living pioneers.

Such leaders as Louis W. Sullivan, the first African-American secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Gertrude C.T. Hunter, the first

Doctor Assistants Are Becoming Vital Link

Whether in an inner city or a rural health clinic, physician assistants are becoming a critical link in the delivery of primary health care.

"With increased competition between managed care plans, physician assistants are proving to be a cost-effective source of care for greater numbers of patients," said Carl Fasser, director of the physician assistant program at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Adding a physician assistant to a practice, Fasser says allows the physician to spend more time with problematic cases while shifting some of the patient care to the assistant.

David Bartlett, a physician assistant at an occupational/family practice office in Corpus Christi, Texas, sees the diversity of his job as one of the best benefits.

"At this practice, I see everything

from pediatrics to geriatrics," said Bartlett, who graduated from Baylor's program in 1991. "My day may range from giving a safety lecture at a company to stitching a minor cut."

Other standard responsibilities include taking patient histories, giving physicals, identifying and managing patient problems and carrying out therapies discussed with the physician.

"A PA provides a permanent intern for the physician," Bartlett said. "After I see a patient, the doctor can come in and work with the information I have obtained."

During training, PA students study the basic sciences, preventive medicine and public health. The second year involves intense training in medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, psychiatry, emergency medicine and community health

clinics.

"Our PA graduates are well-prepared to work in hospitals, specialty clinics or general practices," Fasser said. "The current demand is definitely ambulatory and primary care."

Bartlett had 10 job offers waiting when he graduated. If he counts the out-of-state offers, the number climbs to 25.

Baylor's 27-month program, one of three PA programs in Texas, enrolls 40 students each year. A master's level program, it requires entering students to have a bachelor's degree and specified hours in the sciences and humanities.

The occupation, Fasser says, offers a professional medical career that leaves room for a personal life.

"Right now we are being asked for more physician assistants than we can possibly train," Fasser said.

Smoking Linked To Depression And Suicide

During the Great American Smokeout Thursday, millions of Americans will attempt to crush out their cigarettes for the last time, but most who try to stop say they just can't.

According to Michael Resnick, M.D., psychiatrist and an expert in nicotine with Portland's Providence Health System, smoking is linked to depression, and it's the smokers with a history of depression who have the hardest time quitting on their own.

"Nicotine influences neurotransmitters in the brain that modulate emotion; therefore, smoking may make someone who is depressed feel better - and quitting may trigger adverse withdrawal symptoms including depression," said Resnick.

He adds that those who are depressed also are the least likely to succeed in stop smoking programs, with only about a six percent success rate after one year.

Research also links teen suicide to smoking. In Oregon, the 1993 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found a strong association between heavy cigarette smoking and thoughts of sui-

cide, especially in girls. More than three quarters of girls who reported smoking more than 20 cigarettes per day had considered suicide, and heavy smokers were far more likely to be treated for a suicide attempt than non-smokers. Physicians are quick to emphasize that smoking does not cause suicide, but may be an indicator of depression.

Resnick confirms that ad-

vertising and peer pressure continue to be the biggest influences on teen smoking. Teenagers have a tendency toward "risk-taking behaviors," and they wrongly believe they can experiment with smoking and not become addicted.

"With the social support that the Great American Smokeout offers, smokers want to quit can begin the road to cessation," Resnick said.

