



WestCAP WORDS

WESTERN COLORADO AIDS PROJECT

805 Main Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501
(970) 243-2437 or 1-800-765-8594

May-June 2009

“There are endless possibilities in every present moment...”

Important Numbers:

WestCAP:
(970) 243-2437
1-800-765-8594

website:
www.westcap.info

ADAP program:
1-866-499-2879

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service:
1-800-448-0440

CDC National Hotline:
800-342-2437 (English);
800-344-SIDA (en español);
800-243-7889 (for people who have a hearing impairment)

Western Colorado HIV Specialty Care Clinic:
Lucy Graham: 255-1735, or
toll-free @ 866/448-8383

Office Hours
are
Monday-Friday,
8:30 AM-5:00 PM.

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GOOD NEWS in Uncertain Times!

It is tempting as I write this article to talk about a topic that is difficult to ignore: the economy. And with good reason. Times are hard and getting harder. People are struggling, requests for services are increasing, non-profits are worrying, and funders are reducing. The outlook seems bleak. Times are uncertain and headlines are depressing. We are all aware of how difficult things are right now and it is easy to get stuck there. I don't want to focus on the doom and gloom because there is good news, even now.

Although WestCAP has seen a significant increase in client requests due to many people being laid off or experiencing a reduction in hours at work, we are still able to assist our clients and continue providing the services that we have provided for years. **GOOD NEWS!** On April 1st, WestCAP began a new fiscal year, and a new year of Ryan White funding. WestCAP was awarded federal Ryan White funding, through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, which provides clients with assistance in areas such as medical, dental, and medication costs, as well as housing, nutritional, and medical transportation. WestCAP's 2009-2010 Ryan White award is slightly less than the award amount in 2008-2009 but, although this means that there is less money for greater need, WestCAP will continue to be able to work with our clients in maintaining HIV care. Because clients are requesting more assistance than in the past, it is important now more than ever to keep your medical case manager aware of your medical and financial status and develop a plan to address some of these needs long-term. Active participation in your care is critical in these times! Partner with your case manager to determine the best course of action that will help with your care.

Our Prevention and Education programs are still going strong and WestCAP has been funded to continue outreach and education to our communities! **GOOD NEWS!** We are also increasing our collaborations with other providers in order to bring additional services to the Western Slope. Even though we shouldn't focus on the economy, we cannot ignore the reality that there have been cutbacks in funding for social programs. Collaboration allows us to provide more services while sharing the cost with other providers. Increasing collaborations with exist-

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CLIENT SERVICES

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ing partners and creating new partners will help WestCAP continue to provide essential education and prevention programs and increase our ability to reach more people on the Western Slope.

GOOD NEWS! We are in this together and together we will continue to fulfill WestCAP's mission and philosophy: offering non-judgmental, confidential, and compassionate assistance to HIV-affected persons, families, and loved ones while promoting the client's choices, self-growth, and independence.

Even in tough times, it is important to never lose sight of the **GOOD NEWS!**

—Mary Beth Luedtke, Executive Director

CASE MANAGEMENT TIDBITS

Reminder: If you have a partner that needs an HIV test, please let your case manager know. It is free to partners of clients, and case managers can work within your schedule.

Volunteer: WestCAP would love your help. We need volunteers for the food program and Bingo. Thank you to all that volunteer already. The help is much appreciated!

Watch the Mail: Case Management recently sent out a letter to help our working relationship with clients. Please read it and contact your case manager if you have any comments, concerns, or questions.

Retreats: Shadowcliff is coming up again and there is some talk of other HIV-positive retreats becoming available. Please let your case manager know if you are interested in attending any HIV support-related retreats. There may be some assistance available.

Check In: Client Services is transitioning to “medical case management.” This means that we will be checking in to see how you are doing with your medication and discussing ways to help you adhere to taking all of your medications at the same time every day. We will also be asking about your recent labs and overall how your health is. We are here to help you to stay healthy.

“The truly happy person is the one who can enjoy the scenery even when he must take a detour”

(Author unknown)

The Dollar on a Budget

Part 1

During these hard economic times, the dollar doesn't seem to go as far as it used to. The following are ways to save money by doing some simple things.

- **Write a list before you go shopping - and stick to it.**
- **Drink more water.** Drink a big glass of water before each meal, and not only will you digest it better, you won't eat as much, saving on your food bill. You'll also find yourself feeling a bit better as you begin to get adequately hydrated. (Most Americans are often dehydrated.)

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CLIENT SERVICES

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- **Cut back on the convenience foods—fast foods, microwave meals, and so on.**
- **Make a quadruple batch of a casserole.** Casseroles are nice, easy dishes to prepare. Freeze the leftovers.
- **Plan your meals around your grocery store's flyer.**
- **Do a price comparison - and find a cheaper grocery store.**
- **Grow your own vegetable garden.**
- **Try to go out only once a week to get all your shopping and other tasks completed.**

DINNER AND A MOVIE

“What Happens in Vegas” starring Cameron Diaz and Ashton Kutcher is a comedy/romantic movie that everyone must see. The strangers meet in Vegas and after a wild crazy night and lots of drinks they wake up to realize they got married. The pair is a complete mismatch. As they are trying to go their separate ways, one hits the jackpot with the other's quarter. The judge (Dennis Miller) frizzes the money and orders the couple six months of marriage counseling that follows an all-out war of the sexes as Jack and Joy go to extreme situation to cheat each other of the money. At the end learn to gamble on love against the odds.

Avocados Tomatoes Salad: this is easy to prepare and perfect for a snack or side dish.

Ingredients:

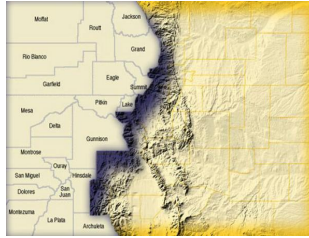
- 2 Hass Avocados, diced small
 - 1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
 - 3 tablespoons sweet onion, diced small
 - 1 jalapeno, finely chopped
 - 3 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
 - 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
 - 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
 - Salt to taste
 - 1 head baby red romaine lettuce, trimmed and left as whole leaves
 - 1 medium head frisee, washed and chopped
 - 1 bunch watercress, washed and chopped
1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl, gently mix, and season with salt to taste. If preferred, add more cilantro and fresh lime juice to taste.
 2. Refrigerate for thirty minutes prior to serving.
 3. Just before serving, toss salad with romaine, frisee and watercress. Season to taste with salt and fresh black pepper. Serve immediately.

(This recipe was originally created by: Mexican Hass Avocado.)

A great big huge **“THANK YOU”** to Canyon View Vineyard Church, Toys for Tots, and George Taber for donating winter holiday gifts to children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. The support gave many families a wonderful holiday and chance to celebrate. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

PREVENTION

ManREACH MARCHES TOWARDS JUNE



by Scott Montgomery

WestCAP administers three ManREACH chapters, Western Colorado's social groups designed to allow gay/bisexual/questioning men to interact in safe, secure, and sober surroundings. Our three chapters are based out of Grand Junction, Durango, and Glenwood Springs—serving the Grand Valley, southwest, and Roaring Fork areas. Manhood, based out of Fort Collins and serving Northern Colorado, is administered by NCAP. Statewide ManREACH, an umbrella organization for all of the ManREACH chapters, is its own 501(c)3 and is co-administered by NCAP, WestCAP, and contractors. SCAP hopes to have a ManREACH-modeled prevention program for men who self-identify as having sex with men, in the near future.

We had a busy March. Grand Valley ManREACH held a core group meeting and dinner social on March 10th, during which we planned our social outreach events for the remainder of 2009. Representatives from both Western Equality and Western Slope Bears were in attendance. Roaring Fork ManREACH held its monthly hot springs soak and coffee social on Friday the 13th. Grand Valley ManREACH presented its quarterly MGroup educational workshop on March 24th. Roaring Fork ManREACH participated in a quarterly MGroup on March 29th, and we offered free rapid HIV testing at Planned Parenthood in Glenwood Springs on March 30th.

Grand Valley ManREACH collaborated with Western Equality for outreach at the Masquerade dance at Mesa Theater on April 24th. Roaring Fork ManREACH held its monthly hot springs soak and coffee social on April 10th.

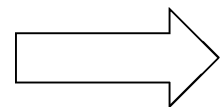
Grand Valley ManREACH is planning a rafting trip at Rimrock Adventures in May. Statewide ManREACH has planned a regional gathering at Stone Forest Retreat in Cedaredge from May 22nd to May 24th. Roaring Fork ManREACH will hold another hot springs soak on May 15th.

Grand Valley ManREACH will liaise again with Western Equality for outreach purposes at the Pridefest West picnic and potluck in Hawthorne Park on June 13th. PostModern Man will hold its annual 'Shenanigans' Variety Show at Lincoln Center in Fort Collins on June 5th.

FDA APPROVES RUBBER FEMALE CONDOM



by Scott Montgomery



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On March 11th, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the Chicago-based Female Health Company's new FC2 Female Condom. In contrast to the company's original FC1 Female Condom, which is made of polyurethane plastic, the FC2 is made of a synthetic rubber called nitrile. The company asserted that the nitrile is softer than the polyurethane and costs up to 30% less. Members of the public can purchase the FC1 for between \$2.80 and \$4.00 per condom.

Female Health's Strategic Adviser, Mary Ann Leeper, stated that the FC2 is "...an important development in efforts to deliver affordable access to woman-initiated HIV prevention in the United States and around the world."

The FDA approval of the FC2 will allow the U.S. Agency for International Development to distribute the condoms via global HIV/AIDS programs. The first-generation FC1 has been distributed by United Nations agencies in 142 countries.

The FC1 Female Condom, which the FDA approved in 1993, is manufactured in the United Kingdom. The FC2 is being manufactured in Malaysia.

WestCAP currently gets the FC1 at a unit price of approximately \$1.21 when ordering in bulk. The manufacturer promises availability by the fourth calendar quarter of this year.

[Sources: Reuters, Associated Press, The Female Health Company]

"I see nothing but upsides for the fight against HIV in Senator Obama's visit to Kenya. The senator's emphasis on underlying cultural, social, and economic issues like stigma and women's rights is right on target."

Drew Altman, President and CEO, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006

This was the comment Altman made after then-Senator Barack Obama and his partner Michelle made a visit to Kenya and were photographed taking HIV tests. In 2008 Senator Obama and running mate Joe Biden proposed a comprehensive, broad-minded plan to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic; this article will examine the progress made by their administration towards those goals. According to the official presidential campaign website, "Obama...pledged...in the first year of his presidency...to develop and begin to implement a comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategy that includes all federal agencies...to reduce HIV infections, increase access to care, and reduce HIV-related disparities."

The plan was hailed by organizations committed to fighting the disproportionate effect of HIV/AIDS underrepresented communities. The Black AIDS Institute commended Obama for "acknowledging the disproportionate impact this epidemic is having on Black communities and pledging to focus on ending the AIDS epidemic in our communities. That is exactly the kind of leadership Black people should expect from our next president." Proposals included universal health care, which would ensure access to early HIV testing and treatment for underserved populations, and addressing inequities in health care through quality measurement and reporting, as well as diversification of health care professionals.

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The plan proposed by the Obama/Biden campaign also promised to increase access to care and treatment for people living with HIV and raise the focus on new infections and expand funding for vaccine/microbicide research/development. Obama's/Biden's approach included addressing further the global impact of HIV/AIDS. The campaign website proclaimed, "Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe that a comprehensive, long-term approach to combating HIV/AIDS is an important investment in our common security and humanity," pledging \$50 billion by 2013 to this struggle.

Optimism in the HIV/AIDS community after Obama's presidential win dimmed, however, when Global AIDS Coordinator Mark Dybul was asked to remain in place despite calls for his resignation, due to Dybul's association with abstinence-only programs under former President Bush. The Bush administration under Dybul's tenure also restricted HIV risk reduction policies like syringe exchange, and limited HIV prevention work among commercial sex workers. However, shortly after his inauguration, President Obama did ask Dybul to resign, which he did, after pressure from health advocates.

President Obama also acted quickly to abolish the "Global Gag Rule," during his first week in office, which restricted U.S. funding for any international organization providing family planning services. "The U.S. will...work collaboratively to reduce poverty, improve the health of women and children, prevent HIV/AIDS, and provide family planning assistance to women in 154 countries," Obama said.

In March, President Obama released his \$3.55 trillion budget proposal for 2010; according to the Associated Press, this proposal did pledge to increase resources for domestic HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, although the specific amount was not included. The Associated Press also reported that the budget also allowed increased funding for prevention/treatment services for underserved populations.

On April 8, the Obama administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the CDC launched a five-year, \$45 million media campaign, Act Against AIDS, the first federally funded campaign to raise awareness of the epidemic in over 20 years.

There is hope among the public health community for changes in PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief). Although the Bush administration requirement that a third of HIV prevention funding be spent on abstinence-only programs was lifted in July 2008 by Congress, current policies are still limited. Funding is prohibited for organizations targeting commercial sex workers and syringe exchange programs. Also, despite the removal of the abstinence requirement, a new reporting rule requires recipients of PEPFAR funding to justify spending if less than 50% of prevention funding is not abstinence-only focused. During the presidential campaign, Obama and Biden pledged that "best practice, not ideology" would be the basis for HIV/AIDS programming. Time will tell if campaign pledges become policy, but expectations do remain high based on changes that have already been made less than a hundred days into the new administration.

—Rabeeha Ghaffar, Resource & Prevention Program Director

UNTIL THERE IS A CURE THERE IS PREVENTION