

# Health & Family

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TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2007

C D E F

SECTION E



ENTERTAINMENT | 5E

Axl and Guns N' Roses push back release of 'Chinese Democracy'... again.

Coming Wednesday in Carolina Living

Sear it, roast it, eat it: How to cook the perfect steak. And more.

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AS WE AGE

Pam Kelley



## She's going to Myrtle Beach – foot by foot

Late last year, Frances Johnson began contemplating what to do with the rest of her life.

Johnson, a retired project management consultant, has spent the past several years caring for ailing parents. With her 60th birthday approaching, she decided it was time to do something more with her life.

And so, on March 17, Johnson plans to walk down the front steps of her Cotswold home and continue on until she hits Myrtle Beach. She's using the 175-mile trek to raise money for the American Heart Association and increase awareness about women and heart disease.



Johnson

Pledges are approaching \$6,000. Johnson has three other goals before she hits 60 in November: sky dive, finish writing a mystery novel and – the easiest of the bunch – wear a two-piece bathing suit.

This is her way of climbing out of a rut. Before retiring, Johnson had a successful consultant's career. In the past several years, she's cared for her son during an illness, her husband following a car collision and her parents. Her father died in 2004. She now visits her mother twice a day. She began walking last year to shed weight. At some point, she concluded life was passing her by. It was time to challenge herself.

She'll walk for a week, covering 25 miles a day. Her sister-in-law, Margaret Johnson, will walk with her. Her sister-in-law's sister, Ann Craft, will shadow both women by car.

And what's on the agenda once Johnson finishes this year's goals? "Oh, I'll figure out something different for next year," she says. "This may become an annual thing."

### Searching for meaning

Johnson has a lot of company as she searches for meaning in the second half of life. As the nation's 77 million baby boomers approach retirement, many are realizing they can start new careers, pursue long-time passions or use their skills as volunteers.

Increasingly, you can find classes that help plot a course for the latter part of life. Central Piedmont Community College's Lifetime Learning Institute helps boomers explore career changes, life transitions and new interests. Check out [www.cpcc.edu/lifetimelearning](http://www.cpcc.edu/lifetimelearning).

And the N.C. Center for Creative Retirement at UNC Asheville offers Paths to Creative Retirement, a three-day workshop, on April 20, June 22 and Aug. 31. The program (\$750 per person) looks at pursuing a new career, starting a business, delving into community service.

It also examines issues such as aging parents, family relationships, relocation and financial concerns. [www.pathstocreativeretirement.com](http://www.pathstocreativeretirement.com); (828) 251-6140.

### New product watch

Richard Griffiths of Matthews recently opened Charlotte's first American Ramp Systems, which sells and rents modular steel ramps. They don't require a building permit and can be installed within a day. 800-649-5215.

Pam Kelley: 704-358-5271; [pkelley@charlotteobserver.com](mailto:pkelley@charlotteobserver.com).

# Naturopaths seek licensing law

## Many natural-remedy practitioners want legal recognition, but they face strong opposition

BY KAREN GARLOCH  
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Naturopaths pushing for a licensing law in North Carolina often recall the case of Laurence Perry.

The Asheville-area practitioner was found guilty in 2002 of involuntary manslaughter in the death of an 8-year-old diabetic whose parents discontinued her insulin on Perry's advice.

"Here was a man calling himself a doctor of nutritional medicine. He had three degrees on his wall. But none of them was from a four-year naturopathic school," said Carrboro naturopath Susan DeLaney.

As it is now in North Carolina, anyone can claim to be a naturopath (say *NAY-chur-o-path*) – a healer who uses natural remedies to promote well-being and prevent illness. But they are all technically practicing medicine without a license.

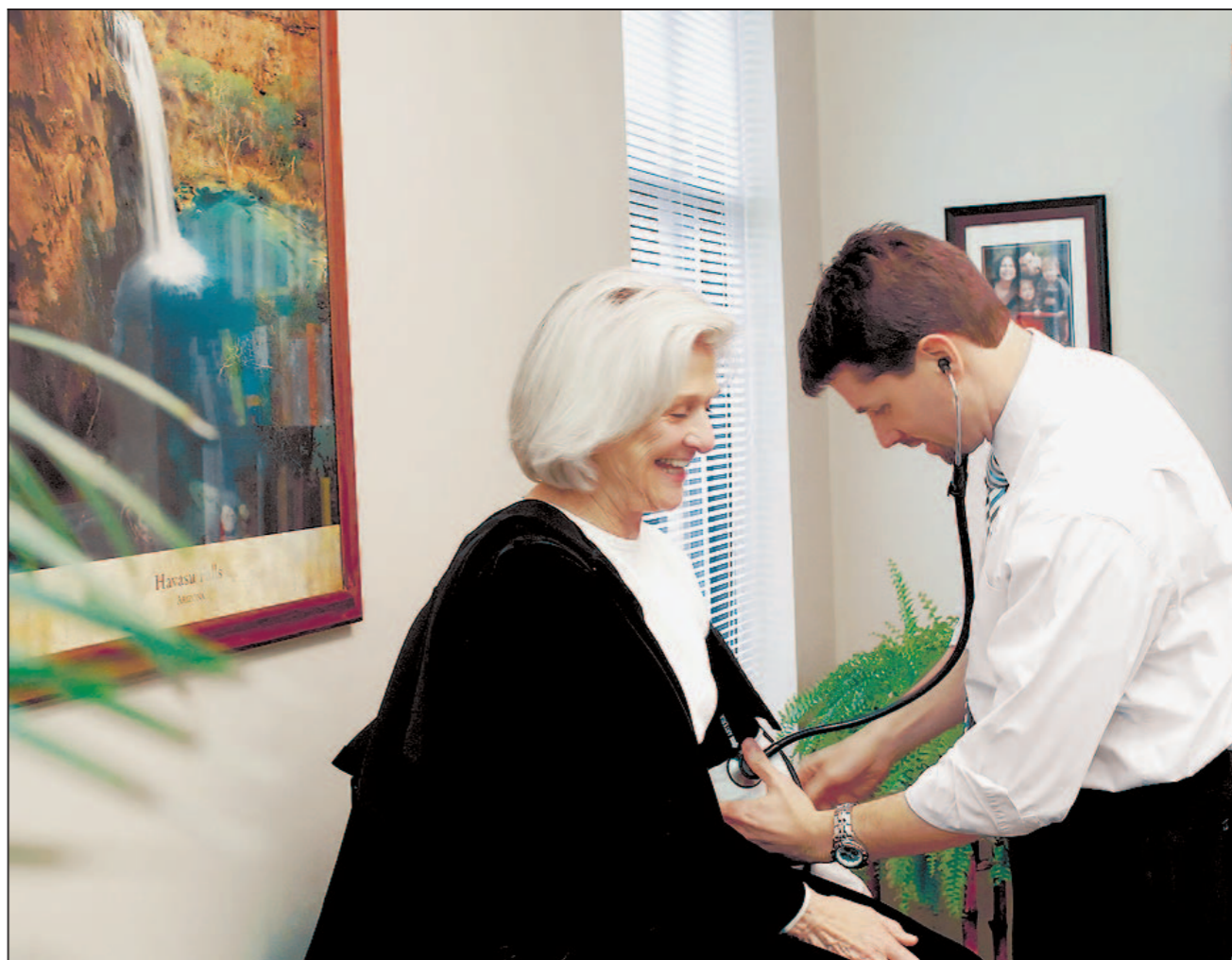
The crime is a misdemeanor in North Carolina, and few are prosecuted. But the threat remains.

For years, DeLaney has been pushing for an N.C. law that would license naturopathic doctors, also called NDs, who have graduated from four-year schools of naturopathic medicine. A new bill is expected to be introduced this week.

"We want to be part of the health-care team," DeLaney said. "Not afraid that we'll be arrested or something."

With a licensing law, DeLaney and other graduates of four-year naturopathic schools want to distinguish themselves from naturopaths

SEE HEALTH CARE | 2E



DIEDRA LAIRD - [dlaird@charlotteobserver.com](mailto:dlaird@charlotteobserver.com)

Rheha Cook of Charlotte gets a physical exam by Matthews naturopath Michael Smith. Naturopaths are primary care providers who use natural therapies, such as homeopathy, acupuncture and herbal medicine, to prevent illness.

"There's a real need for what we do."

MICHAEL SMITH, MATTHEWS NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR

## Treatments aim to help the body heal itself without drugs, surgery

BY KAREN GARLOCH  
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Patients at Carolinas Natural Health Center in Matthews are greeted by the soothing sounds of classical music and a bubbling water fountain. Free hot tea, in flavors of ginger lemongrass and chai spice, is served on the side table.

It's all designed to put people at ease, to help them relax and stay – or get – healthy.

"We know the body has the ability to heal itself, and we're here to support that," said Michael Smith, the naturopathic doctor who opened this office last summer.

Smith, a graduate of Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine in Arizona, offers patients advice about nutrition, herbal medicines and homeopathy. Other practitioners in the office provide acupuncture, massage

therapy, yoga and hypnosis.

"There's a real need for what we do," said Smith, who sees patients with ear infections, colds and flu, attention deficit disorder, autism, irritable bowel syndrome, arthritis and menopausal symptoms.

Smith chose Southwest naturopathic school because of his interest in nutrition. Until then, he had never heard of homeopathy, an age-old therapy based on the principle of "like cures like." For example, ipecac, which induces vomiting, becomes a remedy for nausea when given in a very dilute dose.

He was skeptical until fellow students encouraged him to try homeopathy to treat shingles, a painful viral infection. When he tried it, his pain initially increased. But 30 hours later, his pain was gone for good. Smith

SEE NATUROPATHY | 2E

### What the N.C. Law Would Do

- Create a Naturopathic Medicine Licensing Board with four licensed naturopaths, a medical doctor who practices integrative medicine and a sixth member who does not provide health care.

- Create an advisory council with up to two naturopaths, two medical doctors, a pharmacist or pharmacologist and a nurse.

- Require licensed naturopaths to provide a list of medical doctors who will accept referrals.
- Permit licensed naturopaths to diagnose and treat illness, dispense vitamins and herbal medicines and perform physical exams, and provide health counseling and education.

Source: Proposed bill sponsored by N.C. State Sen. Eleanor Kinnaird, D-Carrboro.

Client Name: HEALTH/E001/Zo1  
Advertiser:  
Section/Page/Zone:  
Description:  
Ad Number:  
Insertion Number:  
Size:  
Color Type:

The Charlotte Observer

Publication Date: 03/06/2007

LIKE THOSE WHO WATCH, IT'S A FAMILY

## 'Idol' delivers on its promise

Kitschy show appeals to all ages, races, political persuasions



MICHAEL LAVINE - FOX PHOTO

The "Idol" family includes Simon Cowell, Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul and Ryan Seacrest. The show attracts more than 33 million viewers – black and white, rich and poor, red state and blue.

### AMERICAN IDOL

8 p.m. today, Wednesday, Thursday, Fox (WCCB, Channel 18)

BY VIRGINIA HEFFERNAN  
New York Times

Fox's "American Idol" is a joy to behold. Like a cotton gin, a Model T or an iPod, the contraption just goes. Season after season, and despite glitches that might ground a lesser show, "Idol" holds up.

When the motor really revs high – as when the show deflects an amateurish Internet scandal involving fake dirty pictures of a contestant, or an "Idol" alumna, Jennifer Hudson, wins an Oscar – it even affords fans a flash of reflected glory. The competition's final-

ists may end up in a dubious order (with Hudson, whom Simon Cowell championed early on, voted off), but each round of "Idol" brings to light stunningly worthy singers.

At the same time, it entertains whole families, including the Motown dads and bubble-gum tweens who no programmer dared hope would ever share a couch again, much less a protocol for using cell phones to text in votes.

It's a show, in other words, that does what it promises. It makes music stars, where "The Apprentice" mints no businesspeople and "The Bachelor" can't consecrate a single marriage. It regularly attracts more than 33 million viewers – young and old, black and white, rich and poor, red state and blue; more than the number who watched

SEE PHENOMENON | 8E



KATHY WILLENS - AP PHOTO

Jennifer Hudson may have gotten the boot from "Idol," but she ended up with a bigger prize – an Oscar.



# Health

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

# Naturopaths seek licensing law

## The goal is to help body heal itself

Naturopathy from IE

knew that many people suffer with shingles for months or years. "That was remarkable to me. The results were dramatic."

Now Smith specializes in homeopathy, choosing among thousands of remedies based on detailed interviews about each patient's symptoms. If a woman complains of hot flashes, he asks what time they occur, what they feel like, how they make her feel. "I need to know what that hot flash is like," he said. "All the things that conventional doctors couldn't care less about, I'm really interested in."

Many patients choose naturopaths because of their desire to avoid drugs and surgery.

"I don't like putting chemicals in my body," said Ginny Wright, a Charlotte psychologist who has been using natural medicine

for 40 years. "It just makes sense to me to do a combination of Western medical treatment and natural alternative treatment."

Wright takes herbal supplements, such as DHEA (to balance her hormones), ginkgo biloba ("to make sure I don't lose my mind") and lysine to stave off fever blisters.

When Wright feels a cold or flu coming on, she calls her naturopathic physician, Jessica Stadtmayer, who "puts me on all kinds of immune boosters and viral fighters," Wright said.

"I haven't had to take an antibiotic or be in the hospital or have any kind of serious treatment for anything in ages. And I feel great. Nobody can believe I'm 68 years old."

Medicare doesn't cover the



DIEDRA LAIRD - dlaird@charlotteobserver.com

A bubbling water fountain contributes to the soothing atmosphere in naturopathic physician Michael Smith's practice, Carolinas Natural Health Center in Matthews.

cost of naturopathic care, but Wright says: "I think it's worth it enough that I'm willing to pay for it."

Other patients, such as Savilla Sistrunk of Charlotte, find naturopaths only after they've become frustrated with traditional medicine.

Sistrunk, 55, has been taking medicine for high blood pressure for several years and was recently diagnosed with borderline diabetes. When she asked her medical doctor if she should change her diet, she said he told her no. But at 192 pounds, Sistrunk knew she should lose weight.

She began seeing Marcy Scott, Smith's partner in Matthews, who advised her to cut carbohydrates and sugar from her diet. Sistrunk lost 20 pounds

in five months. She also began taking supplements and herbs to help her blood sugar, blood pressure and menopausal symptoms.



Sistrunk

When Sistrunk told her medical doctor what she was doing, she said, "He really hit the ceiling. He told me, 'Those people don't do nothing but just take your money.'" She has since left that doctor. Her blood pressure is back in normal range even though she no longer takes prescription medicine.

"I'm not above taking medicine if I have to," she said, "but if I can do it with my eating, I want to do that first."

Health Care from IE

who took courses online or through the mail.

"They call themselves 'doctors' like I do," said Michael Smith, a Matthews naturopath and president of the N.C. Association of Naturopathic Physicians. "But our training is vastly different, and unless you understand that there's a difference, you have no idea."

### 3 sides to the debate

Medical doctors, who sometimes refer to NDs as "Not Doctors," oppose the proposed licensing law, partly because it doesn't include a method for ridding the state of naturopaths without four-year degrees.

"We have problems even with the better-trained ones," said Steve Keene, general counsel for the N.C. Medical Society. "It's not particularly useful to license one group if you're not going to do something about preventing the other group from practicing."

That "other group" - naturopaths who didn't attend four-year schools - is even more vocal in its opposition.

"If licensing is pursued, it has to be inclusive and not exclude the vast majority of naturopaths in practice," said Mike Causey, executive director for Citizens for Healthcare Freedom, based in Raleigh.

"So long as the practitioner is causing no harm ... people should have a right to choose their own health care."

Naturopaths who don't attend four-year schools are educated in a variety of ways. One popular school is Clayton College of Natural Health in Birmingham, Ala., which offers a variety of distance-learning programs.

Four-year naturopathic schools are accredited by an organization approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Clayton is accredited by a different group, the American Association of Drugless Practitioners, which isn't recognized by the federal government.

Boyd Landry is executive director of the national Coalition for Natural Health, which represents "traditional naturopaths" and other alternative practition-

ers. He said distance-learning schools teach naturopathy "in its traditional and original form," and approval by the education department is not necessary.

"Licensing is not a guarantee of safety," Landry said. "We can't legislate good behavior. ... If you're good, people will find you. If you're bad, nobody will go to you."

### Levels of medical training

Support for licensing naturopaths has been growing elsewhere. Fourteen states (none in the Southeast) have such laws.

"The reason is for public safety," said Charlotte naturopath Crystal Abernathy. "It's to distinguish the NDs that are legitimately trained at accredited naturopathic schools from the people who just took a weekend course."

It's impossible to know how many naturopaths practice in North Carolina, since there is no central registry or licensing board. The N.C. Association of Naturopathic Physicians, which represents only graduates of four-year naturopathic schools, lists about 20, including five in the Charlotte area.

Abernathy graduated from UNC Charlotte as a liberal arts major, then returned for classes in biology and chemistry before enrolling in the four-year Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in Toronto. In her first year there, she dissected cadavers in anatomy class, just as medical students do.

She learned about pharmacology, physical examination and laboratory assessment, as well as nutrition, homeopathy, acupuncture and herbal medicine.

Students at four-year naturopathic schools take more than 5,000 hours of instruction, including 1,500 hours in clinical training, according to Karen Howard, executive director of the Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges. That compares with the average medical school student, who takes 4,794 hours of instruction,

### Accredited 4-year Naturopathic Schools

- University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine, Bridgeport, Conn.
- Bastyr University, Kenmore, Wash., near Seattle
- National College of Naturopathic Medicine, Portland, Ore.
- Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences, Tempe, Ariz.

(Accredited by Council on Naturopathic Medical Education, www.cnme.org; members of Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges (AANMC), www.aanmc.org.)

### JURISDICTIONS WITH LICENSING LAWS FOR NATUROPATHIC DOCTORS

Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and Washington. Also: Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands.

### OTHER SOURCES

- N.C. Association of Naturopathic Physicians: www.ncanp.com.
- American Association of Naturopathic Physicians: www.naturopathic.org.
- Citizens for Healthcare Freedom: www.citizensfor-healthcarefreedom.org.
- Coalition for Natural Health: www.natural-health.org.

including 3,224 hours of clinical training, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.

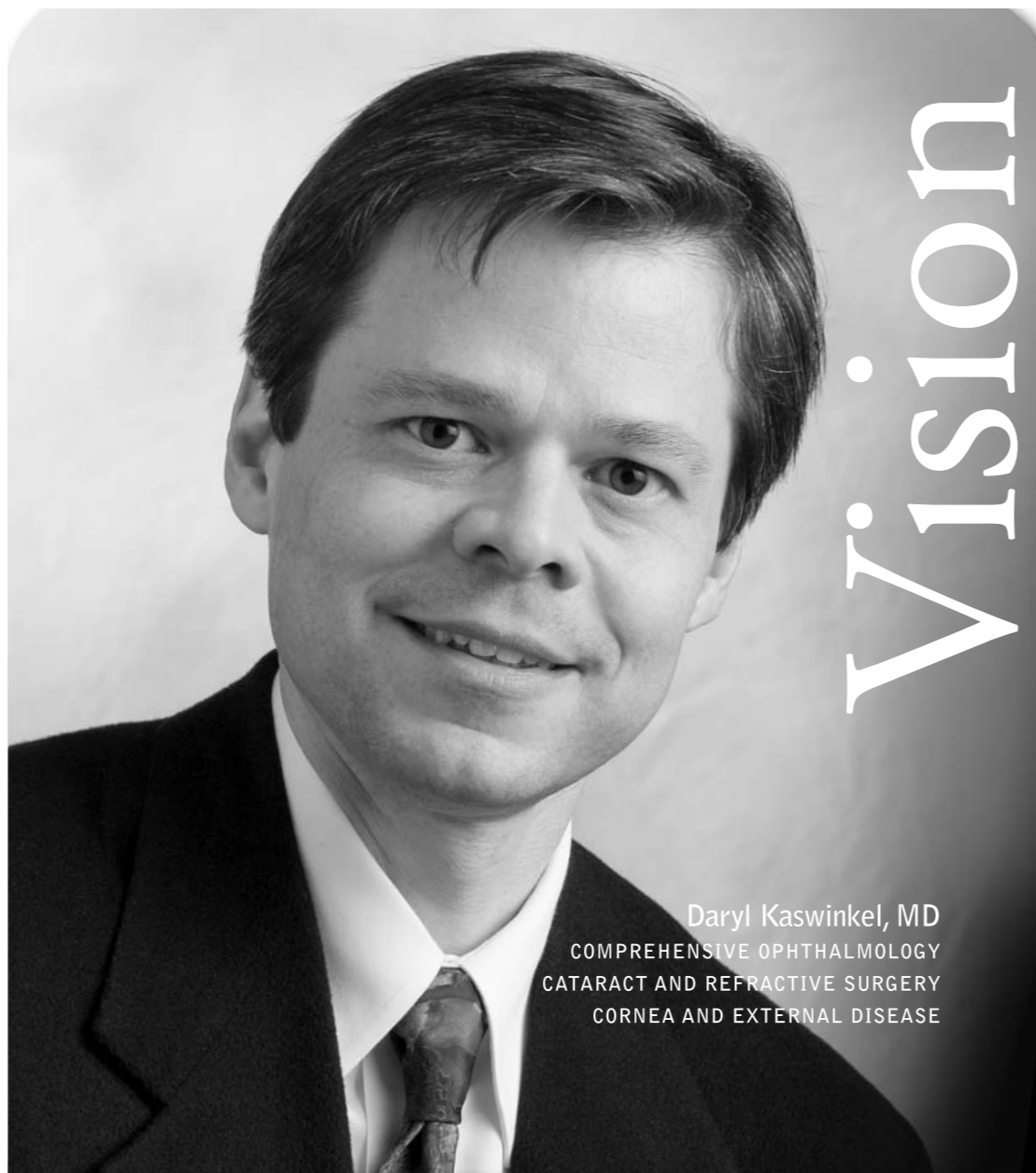
"We have to know everything that medical doctors know," Abernathy said. "But we don't do what medical doctors do, and we don't pretend to. ... Both have a legitimate right to do their jobs."

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The Charlotte Observer  
Publication Date: 03/06/2007

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### Treatments for liver spots

Q. Will you please offer some remedies to help fade spots (age or liver spots) on the hands and elsewhere on the body? I have been told that these are from too much sun years ago.

Age or liver spots are officially called "solar lentiginosities." These brownish spots frequently show up on the face and other places where people have been exposed to excess sunshine. Dermatologists have traditionally recommended fade creams that contain hydroquinone (found in products like Esoterica and Porcelana). It is highly controversial, however. The Food and Drug Administration is threatening to ban hydroquinone because of an-

imal studies suggesting that it might have cancer-causing properties. The European Union has already banned hydroquinone from cosmetics.

Many dermatologists maintain that in the low concentrations found in over-the-counter products, hydroquinone poses no risks. Nevertheless, you may want to consider other options. One is the prescription acne or anti-wrinkle cream tretinoin (Avita, Retin-A, Renova) applied once daily for six months. Dermatologists can also eliminate age spots by freezing them with liquid nitrogen or by using a laser or intense pulsed light (IPL) therapy. Whatever you do to eliminate age spots, reduce sun exposure from now on. Use a UVA and UVB sunblock that contains zinc or titanium to prevent recurrences.

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### Health Calendar

#### Today

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS:** Dr. Robert Yapundich, a Hickory neurologist, will give a free talk on "MS Revealed: A Look at the MS Research of Today & Tomorrow" in connection with National MS Awareness Week. The program, sponsored by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Mid-Atlantic Chapter, is aimed at young adults with multiple sclerosis. It will be from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at Charlotte Marriott Executive Park, 5700 Westpark Drive. Registration is required for dinner. Contact Stephanie Hackler, 704-525-2955.

#### Today and Wednesday

**EATING DISORDERS:** Charlotte Center for Balanced Living is offering free screenings for eating disorders and free consultations on nutrition and acupuncture, in connection with National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. The center, at 505 East Blvd., Suite 200, is also a drop-off location for the "Great Jeans Giveaway!" which encourages people to become "comfortable in their genes" by donating old pairs of "skinny jeans" that do not fit. 704-378-1390 or www.charlottebalance.com.

#### Upcoming

**NUTRITION:** Dr. Joel Fuhrman, a New Jersey family physician and expert in nutritional medicine, will lead a day-long workshop called "Eat To Live" March 17. Fuhrman, author of "Eat to Live: The Revolutionary Plan for Fast and Sustained Weight Loss," will talk about how to eat better and live smarter by using simple dietary techniques. The event is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lake Norman YMCA, 21300 Davidson St., Cornelius. Cost: \$20. For reservations: Alexis Frank, 800-474-9355, ext. 230. www.DrFuhrman.com.

**KIDNEY DISEASE:** Free screening for kidney disease will be offered Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m. at Mount Moriah Primitive Baptist Church, 747 W. Trade St. The screening program is sponsored by the National Kidney Foundation and Carolinas HealthCare System in connection with National Kidney Month. Those at risk for kidney disease include people with diabetes, high blood pressure or a family history of kidney disease. Participants will get weight and blood pressure checks. Medical professionals will collect blood and urine samples from those who require further testing. A physician on-site will review results with patients. 800-356-5362 or www.kidney.org.