

# THE COALITION VOICE

**A newsletter of the  
Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition  
August 2007**

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*ACS Survey Reports Americans' Cancer Misconceptions  
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## NEWS MAKERS

### **Dr. Billy Philips Named Department Chairman at UTMB Galveston**

Dr. Billy U. Philips, Jr. has received a two-year appointment as chairman of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health effective, September 1, 2007.

Dr. Philips is a professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health, (PMCH) and has served as director of the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics for the past decade and director of the PMCH graduate program for the past six years.

Notably, Dr. Philips led the development of the Master of Public Health Program, guiding it to full accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health. He is a member of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) Cancer Center and is the principal investigator on the National Cancer Institute's funded *CATCHUM Project*, a consortium of the Texas Medical Schools devoted to advancing cancer prevention and control education.

He founded and is the director for a statewide program for cancer patients and their caregivers called the *Cancer Nutrition Network for Texans* that is funded in partnership with the Texas Cancer Council. Dr. Philips' career research and scholarly interests have been in cancer prevention and control, and his work has been recognized by the Texas Legislature with the Gibson Lewis Award for Public Education and by the Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition with their Leadership Award, as the founding chairman.



*Dr. Billy Philips*

He is an accomplished and widely published author in the peer-reviewed literature of books, educational modules, and online web education resources. Dr. Philips has served other administrative posts in his 30+ year career at UTMB, including over a decade as associate dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences.

As chairman, Dr. Philips will lead the continuation of the developing public and population health sciences at UTMB. The Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health is a unique resource in Texas and one of the premier units of its kind among the U.S. medical schools. It is integrally involved with several UTMB Centers focused on Aging, Cancer and Environmental Health and has significant ties with NASA in providing health care for space flight support and in training flight surgeons for NASA and the U.S. military.

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### ***Survey Finds Many Americans Believe Unsubstantiated Claims About Cancer***

A new study from American Cancer Society researchers finds a surprising number of Americans believe scientifically unsubstantiated claims concerning cancer, and that population segments suffering the greatest burden of cancer are the most likely to be misinformed.

Evidence indicates that healthy behavior depends in part on an accurate assessment of proven risk factors. Previous research has shown that undue concern about unproven risk factors may distract some attention from proven risk factors and might actually result in decisions that are bad for the health. For the current report, published in the September 1 issue of *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, researchers led by Kevin Stein, PhD, in the American Cancer Society's Behavioral Research Center used a nationwide telephone survey to assess the prevalence of unproven beliefs about cancer in the U.S.

The survey included 12 inaccurate or unlikely statements about cancer risk, risk factors, and prevention, some of which frequently show up in email inboxes, and asked participants to identify the statements as true or false. While more than two-thirds of the participants were able to identify seven of the 12 statements as false, five of the 12 statements were endorsed as true by at least a quarter of the respondents, and for seven of the statements, uncertainty was higher than 15 percent. Among the survey's findings: nearly seven in 10 Americans (67.7 percent) said the risk of dying of cancer in the U.S. is increasing. Nearly four in 10 (38.7 percent) agreed that living in a polluted city is a greater risk for lung cancer than smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. Three in 10 (29.7 percent) thought electronic devices, like cell phones, can cause cancer. About one in seven (14.7 percent) thought personal hygiene products, like shampoo, deodorant, and antiperspirants, can cause cancer. Six percent (6.2 percent) thought underwire bras could cause breast cancer.

The study also found that the two statements most often rated as "true" by the general public were among the statements unanimously identified as false by a group of 10 epidemiologists who were also given the survey. Most strikingly, the statement about the risk of dying from cancer in the United States being on the increase is clearly false, as the age-standardized cancer death rate has been decreasing since the early 1990s, and the five-year relative survival rate for all cancers combined has improved steadily during the last 30 years. Yet fully 68 percent of the respondents believed the statement. As for why so many believed living in a polluted city is a greater risk for lung cancer than smoking a pack of cigarettes a day, the authors point to studies that have shown people who engage in behaviors like smoking or unprotected sun exposure tend to underestimate the personal risks associated with these choices despite knowledge of the risk in general.

The researchers also found associations between certain sociodemographic variables and the likelihood of believing the false statements. One consistent finding was that males were more likely to believe the statements to be true than were females (eight of the 12 statements). Indeed, some research indicates that males may be less attentive to and less likely to seek medical information than are females, and thus may be less well informed. Those with lower educational levels were more likely to endorse 10 of the 12 statements, consistent with most prior studies of health literacy.

The authors concede that individual beliefs are frequently not the most influential determinants of health behavior, and that other factors, like access to regular care and insurance, physician advice, and socioeconomic factors, have a major influence. Still, they conclude: “Public education programs and interventions to address and convincingly refute commonly held misconceptions regarding cancer risks might increase the adoption of healthy attitudes, beliefs, and, most importantly, behaviors,” adding that “educational and intervention programs should be culturally-informed and accessible to all individuals, with special attention placed on reaching the highest risk populations.”

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### ***East Texas Community Health Needs Assessment Completed***

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and several local health departments have completed the East Texas Community Health Needs Assessment.

DSHS has presented (or will soon present) the assessment findings at series of community-specific meetings in Athens, Center, Crockett, Henderson, Jacksonville, Jasper, Livingston, Longview, Lufkin, Marshall, Mt. Pleasant, Nacogdoches, Palestine, Paris, Sulphur Springs, Texarkana, and Tyler.

Beginning in February, the assessment gathered information about public health, mental health, substance abuse and medical care through surveys and community forums in 35 East Texas counties. A total of 1,924 people completed the survey, and 470 people attended the community forums.

The most frequently identified ways survey participants said health can improve is to eat better, exercise and be active, have smoke-free restaurants, provide education and funding, and stop smoking. Community forum participants most often identified dental, mental health, substance abuse, medication assistance, and health care for the working poor as health-related services needed but not always available.

“This assessment represents a major effort to document a variety of health issues in East Texas,” said Dr. Paul McGaha, DSHS regional medical director in Tyler. “This assessment will provide useful information that can help in improving health and maximizing resources in this part of the state.” It can impact cancer control and prevention activities supporting community-based initiatives.

Counties covered in the assessment are Anderson, Angelina, Bowie, Camp, Cass, Cherokee, Delta, Franklin, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Hopkins, Houston, Jasper, Lamar, Marion, Morris, Nacogdoches, Newton, Panola, Polk, Rains, Red River, Rusk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Smith, Titus, Trinity, Tyler, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood.

The full report, resource inventory and comprehensive data and information files are available online at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/easttexas](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/easttexas).

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### ***From the Heart Story #3***



The *Texans Conquer Cancer* license plate honors those taken by cancer, celebrates those who have beaten it, and assists those who will fight it in the future.

*From the Heart Story #3:* Through funds from license plate sales, a Lubbock-area nonprofit provided transportation and adjunct medications to an elderly divorced cancer patient who was

having to rely on an abusive ex-husband for rides to her treatment and support group. To obtain an application for purchasing the *Texans Conquer Cancer* license plate, go to [www.texansconquercancer.org](http://www.texansconquercancer.org) or contact the Texas Cancer Council at (512) 438-3029.

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS & PARTNERS

### **Texas A&M Evaluation Identifies Best Practices for Camp**

The *Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Program* offered through Any Baby Can Child and Family Resource Center in Austin serves families of children with cancer who receive their diagnosis from the Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas. Masters level social workers trained in Pediatric Oncology provide services that support families, link them with

resources, and assist them in coping effectively throughout their entire experience with and beyond a cancer diagnosis. Services include advocacy, medical case management, referrals, support groups, individual or family counseling services, and bereavement services.



As part of Any Baby Can/*Candlelighters*

family support activities, Camp Grey Dove is a project held each summer specifically to address the needs of siblings of children with cancer. The week-long camp has operated since 1993, and for the past two summers has been fortunate to be involved in an evaluative study conducted by Texas A&M University MS student Sam Roberson, under the supervision of Dr. Peter Witt.

The purpose of the study is to improve program planning to better ensure a supportive experience for sibling campers. The 2006 evaluation assessed youth making meaningful connections with other siblings and how camp helps youth deal with difficult issues and feelings. Campers reported perceptions of receiving social support at camp from counselors and other siblings. 2007 findings are expected to lead to stronger empirical evidence supporting the benefits of camps for siblings of children with cancer. The 2007 evaluation will examine under what conditions campers perceive social support to occur.

Upon completion of the evaluation, Any Baby Can will be able to share results and best practices through groups like the national network of *Candlelighters* affiliates, the Association for Pediatric Oncology Social Workers, and TCCCC. For more information on Camp Grey Dove or evaluation results, please contact Any Baby Can at (512) 454-3743 or [info@abcaus.org](mailto:info@abcaus.org).

### ***OriGENal Voice: Bell County Honored at Tobacco Conference***

Four hard-working young ladies from *OriGENal Voice Bell County: Girls Speaking Out Against Big Tobacco* attended the 2007 Texas Teen Tobacco Summit and Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention Conference from July 22-25 in The Woodlands. The conference, organized by the Center for Safe Communities and Schools at Texas State University—San Marcos, included plenary and breakout sessions led by key people in youth tobacco prevention and the fight against big tobacco. The *OriGENal Voice* girls also had the opportunity to begin identifying youth tobacco prevention needs in their communities and begin planning activities for Texas Tobacco-Free Kids Day in 2008. Also at the conference, the 2007 Tobacco-Free Texas Youth Achievement Award was presented to the four *OriGENal*



*2006-2007 Texas Teen Ambassador for the Temple area, Lauren Lindemann, presents the 2007 Tobacco-Free Texas Youth Achievement Award to the OriGENal Voice girls. L to R: Lauren Lindemann, Lainey Sirois, Brenna Sirois (both from Salado Intermediate School in Salado), Hailey Arnold (from Shoemaker High School in Killeen), and Chelsea Hanchett (from Audie Murphy Middle School on Fort Hood).*

*Voice* girls for their outstanding efforts, tireless commitment, and major contributions to the field of tobacco prevention and control and to the citizens of their communities.

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### ***Cancer Care Services 2007 Kids Camp***

Cancer Care Services provided a free week of field trips and expression activities for 33 kids whose parent, guardian, or sibling is in active cancer treatment. During the morning hours the kids took field trips to places such as putt-putt, museums, and bowling, and



then spent the afternoons in three expressive activities including play, art, and music. On July 20, thirty kids and 20 adults loaded a bus and spent the day at Six Flags Over Texas—everyone in matching camp shirts! This was an amazing week, as many of the youngsters are facing challenges that most of us will never understand and yet

they formed bonds quickly with each other and enjoyed activities that their parents can no longer afford due to treatment and medicine costs.

### **S.W.A.T. Team at State 4-H Round Up**

Each year 5,000 4-H members from across the state of Texas converge on the Texas A&M campus to compete in State 4-H Round Up in June. As part of the weeklong activity, the state 4-H staff selects a community service project that all Round Up participants can contribute towards. This year's project was to donate a pair of gently used shoes that would then be donated to a local clothes closet.

S.W.A.T. (Students Winning Against Tobacco) teams helped to coordinate the project by collecting the shoes. The shoes were then used in a display for Round Up participants to illustrate how many Texans die each day from tobacco-related causes. At one of the evening ceremonies, the S.W.A.T. members were given the opportunity to communicate the message that tobacco kills and damages the lives of teenagers like themselves. In addition to the program presentation, S.W.A.T. team members from Armstrong, Swisher, and Deaf Smith counties presented a workshop for 4-H members and leaders about the S.W.A.T. team and how to start one in their own county. Workshop participants learned a great deal from the S.W.A.T. team and are excited about developing a leadership team that could impact their community by spreading the word about the dangers of tobacco use. County extension agents with Texas Cooperative Extension give leadership for the S.W.A.T. teams.



*The Armstrong County S.W.A.T. team members show how to use the puppet show *Adventures in Nicotine Land* to convey information about cigarette use to youth audiences.*

### **S.W.A.T. Growing and Inspiring**

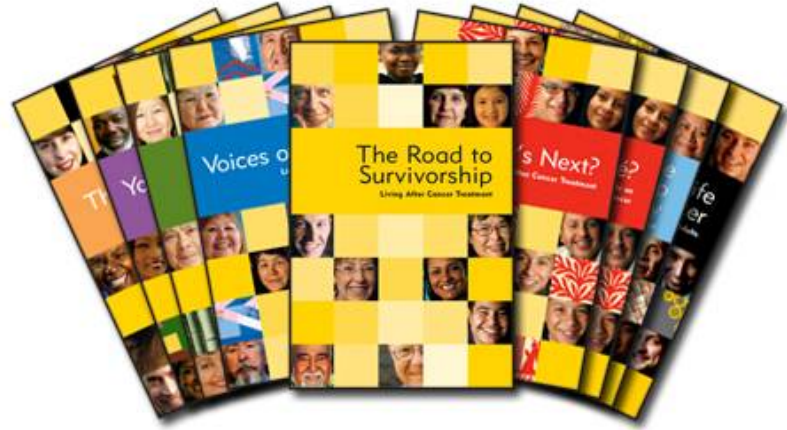
Texas Cooperative Extension conducted a S.W.A.T. (Students Winning Against Tobacco) workshop in June for the third year as part of the Texas Cancer Council grant addressing the reduction of tobacco use in rural youth. Five new teams from Parmer, Castro, Donley, Moore, and Randall counties from the Panhandle and South Plains areas were trained. Helping to conduct the training were active S.W.A.T. teams trained in past workshops. The training was conducted in Canyon, Texas at the Randall County Extension office. The workshop was privileged to have George Cominsky from the Center for Addictive Studies at Texas Tech conduct the morning sessions. Through fun team building activities, he taught participants how to understand why their peers choose to use tobacco. He discussed ways to include them in positive social situations in order to help them make better choices. Also contributing to the training were Sharri Miller and Stacie Pahl from Harrington Cancer Center who work on another Texas Cancer Council grant; Sherri Scott from Texas Department of State Health Services; and Carol Allen from the Amarillo Independent School District.

New team members left excited after a day of fun activities and were inspired by S.W.A.T. team members who have been actively involved in their community for the past two years.

## RESOURCES

### **Living After Cancer Treatment Brochure Series Available from LAF**

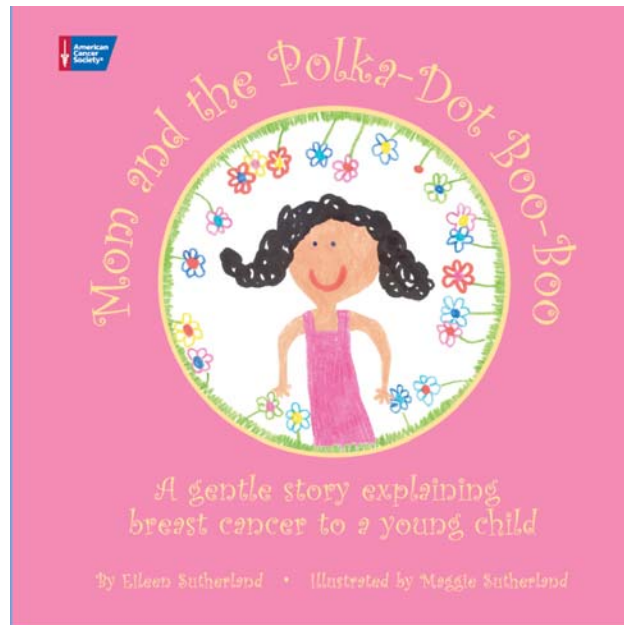
In an effort to help improve the lives of underserved cancer survivors, the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) created the Living After Cancer Treatment brochure series, which provides an introduction to cancer survivorship in a culturally relevant, easy-to-read format. The brochures are available for general audiences as well as the following groups



of cancer survivors: Adolescents and Young adults, African Americans, American Indian/Alaska Natives, Pacific Islanders, Appalachians, Asian Americans and Hispanic/Latino audiences (English and Spanish). Please consider distributing the brochures to cancer survivors in your community. The brochures are free and available at [www.livestrong.org/brochures](http://www.livestrong.org/brochures).

### **Mom and the Polka-Dot Boo-Boo**

American Cancer Society is pleased to present *Mom and the Polka-Dot Boo-Boo*. Fully illustrated and written for the youngest child, this book gently prepares children for what lies ahead in the weeks and months following their mother's diagnosis.



Written by a breast cancer survivor for the families of children ages 2 through 8, the book uses age-appropriate terms and is lovingly illustrated by the author's young daughter.

You may purchase copies at the ACS sale price of \$12.95 (and enjoy free shipping always!) at [www.cancer.org/bookstore](http://www.cancer.org/bookstore).

### ***Cervical Cancer Awareness Poster Featured in Texas Medicine***

The August issue of *Texas Medicine* includes a foldout poster to help heighten awareness of cervical cancer among health professionals and the general public.

This month's poster is the latest in a series of cancer awareness posters developed for the magazine for the past several years. Earlier posters have featured breast, prostate and skin cancers, as well as nutrition and tobacco cessation.

Posters are inserted into *Texas Medicine* for easy pull-out, unfolding to traditional poster size for wall-mounting in exam rooms, libraries and other areas — with all patient information in English and Spanish.

The educational poster series is sponsored by Texas Cancer Council, Texas Cancer Data Center, The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and Texas Medical Association Physician Oncology Education Program.

Look for the cervical cancer awareness poster in *Texas Medicine*, and be sure to display it to help educate your patients and the public about this disease.

For additional free posters, contact Texas Cancer Data Center at (713) 792-2277 or [txcdc@txcancer.org](mailto:txcdc@txcancer.org).

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Growing Healthy Project Delivers Presentation at Texas Rural Health Association 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference***

Lake Country AHEC staff members were selected to present a poster at the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Texas Rural Health Association meeting held July 31 – August 2 in Austin. Debbie Warren and Alyson Hoffman visited with conference attendees concerning the Texas Cancer Council-funded project: *Growing Healthy: Developing Healthy Lifestyles for Prevention Sake!* Details of the past five years of the project were reviewed and plans for future dissemination of the project were discussed.



*Alyson Hoffman, Lake County AHEC, Michelle Frerich, Texas Cancer Council, and Debbie Warren, Lake County AHEC at the poster display at the TRHA conference*

### ***Last Chance to Receive Free Training on The Growing Healthy Project***

Lake Country AHEC received funding in September 2002 from the Texas Cancer Council to develop the *Growing Healthy: Developing Healthy Lifestyles for Prevention Sake* project. Staff working on the project has developed a set of four PowerPoint modules with speaker notes that address risk reduction behaviors that children can adopt early to help reduce their chances of developing cancer. The four modules included in the training guide are: nutrition, physical activity; sun safety, and tobacco awareness. On August 22 an instructor training program will be offered in Tyler. Our seating is limited to 50 participants. This will be the last time that Lake Country AHEC can offer this training at no cost. After August 31 it will be offered on a cost recovery basis. Registration deadline is August 15. To receive registration information, contact Debbie Warren at [Debbie.warren@uthct.edu](mailto:Debbie.warren@uthct.edu) or by phone at (903) 877-5220.

***New Project Coordinator for UTMB’s Educational Cancer Center***

University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston’s (UTMB) Educational Cancer Center, led by Dr. Billy Philips, professor of Preventive Medicine and Community Health, welcomes aboard Janine Ahern as its new project coordinator. Ms. Ahern holds an MBA from the University of St. Thomas, in Houston, Texas and is a native of South Africa. Ms. Ahern fills the place of Ms. Libby Smith who held the position for the last three years and will be missed. The team wishes Ms. Smith all the best for the future.

***New Cancer Education Modules Available Online***

The *CATCHUM Project* continues to thunder ahead with the uploading of the following additional cancer education modules:

- Survivorship
- Oral Cancer with Lymph Node Involvement
- Lymphoma (Hodgkin’s Disease)
- Gynecologic Cancers

Check back to the *CATCHUM* website for updates to include the addition of the cancer health disparities, breast cancer, cancer informatics, cancer genetics, cancer control in special populations: rural cancer disparities, and testicular cancer modules.

These modules are valuable resources not only for medical instructors, medical students and nurses, but can even serve as a refresher course for physicians. If you are interested in finding more about the *CATCHUM Project*, please contact Janine Ahern at (409) 747-2239 [jfahern@utmb.edu](mailto:jfahern@utmb.edu) or go to [www.catchum.utmb.edu](http://www.catchum.utmb.edu).

***Dr. Billy Philips to Speak about Cancer Nutrition at the Deke Slayton Cancer Center in Webster***

Dr. Billy Philips will be presenting the *Cancer Nutrition Network for Texans (CNNT)* patient/caregiver workshop to the “Reach for Recovery” volunteer meeting at the Deke Slayton Cancer Center, in Webster, TX. The meeting is scheduled for October 15 at 6:00p.m. For more information please contact Janine Ahern at (409) 747-2239 or [jfahern@utmb.edu](mailto:jfahern@utmb.edu).

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***NOEP 2007 Training: CNE for Nurses in all Fields of Practice***

Sept. 6-9	TX Nurse Practitioners Conference, Dallas
Sept 8	Annual Update in Medicine, Laredo
Sept. 14	Area Cancer Symposium, Amarillo
Sept. 15	Genetics and Cancer, Austin
Sept 20-21	TNA Annual Nursing Leadership Conference, Austin
Sept. 22	Oncology Nurse (OCN) Review, Harlingen
Sept 28-29	Palliative Care Symposium, El Paso

For details or to register, go to [www.noeptexas.org](http://www.noeptexas.org) or call (800) 515-6770.

***Correction***

The July edition of the *Coalition Voice* contained some incorrect information about *NOEP’s* Wichita Falls conference. The correct text should read:

The DSHS helped to form the Cancer Coalition of North Texas. However, the Colorectal Cancer Coalition has no affiliation to DSHS. It’s a Washington DC-based coalition that Suzanne Lindley, conference panelist, participates with actively.

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***Thank you for your interest in the Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition. Please direct your newsletter ideas and feedback to Texas Cancer Council Executive Director Sandra Balderrama at [sbalderrama@tcc.state.tx.us](mailto:sbalderrama@tcc.state.tx.us) or call (512) 438-3023. News items are collected from and written by variety of sources including the media and our cancer-control partners throughout the state. We reserve the right to edit all content for clarity and brevity.***