



IN LIFE & STYLE

FARM FRESH FARE

Chef reaps what he sows for local market 1F

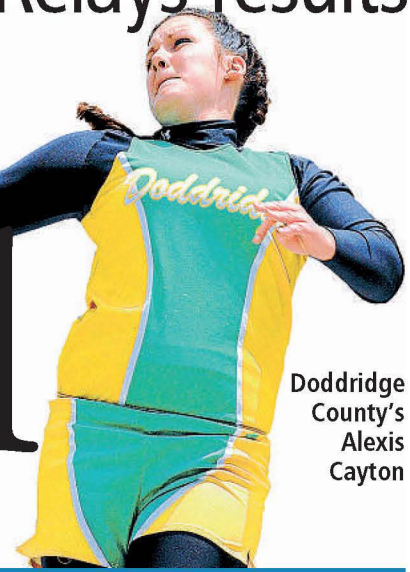
INSIDE | Special section

Health, vacations, exercise and what Boomers like to do Living 50+



IN SPORTS | 1D

Gazette Relays results



Doddridge County's Alexis Cayton



Sunday Gazette-Mail

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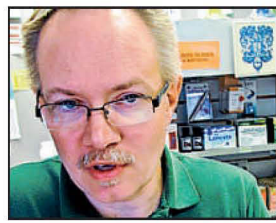
"This is a well-recognized epidemic that affects a quarter million West Virginians. . . . And there seems to be no end in sight."

EVAN JENKINS Director, W.Va. State Medical Association



"About 70 percent of my patient visits are about diabetes issues. . . . If I had 25 percent, I'd think it was normal."

ELAINE MOORE Parsons family practice physician



"The number of type 2 diabetics is growing beyond anything we can possibly affect if we don't get ahead of this problem."

ARNIE VAUGHN Beckley pharmacist, past president, W.Va. Diabetes Educators Association



"It used to be that you didn't see type 2 diabetes till after the age of 30. . . . I have taken care of a 250-pound 9-year-old [with type 2 diabetes]."

BARBARA WEANER Nurse practitioner, Elkins Dialysis Center



"Twenty-five to 40 percent of all patients we see now have diabetes. It's increasing rapidly."

VICKI CHASE R.N., coordinator, Diabetes Education, WVU Hospitals



"Type 2 diabetes is exploding right in front of us, yet people act like nothing unusual is going on. It's bizarre."

FRANK SCHWARTZ M.D., director, Diabetes Center, Ohio University

Epidemic 'exploding' in W.Va.

By Kate Long Staff writer

THINK ABOUT THIS: More than 200,000 West Virginians have contracted a disease that kills people. About 69,000 of them don't know they have it.

It is spreading fast. Another 125,000 West Virginians already have symptoms, the federal Centers for Disease Control says.

This disease causes heart attacks and leads to strokes, blindness, amputations, nerve damage, kidney failure and liver failure. It kills people early. It's starting to attack children.

Obesity is driving this disease. In 2007, 2,459 West Virginians died from it and its complications, according to state records.

All this is true. "The lack of public concern is staggering," said Gina Wood, manager of the state's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program.

"There is absolutely reason to be alarmed," she said. "Our health-care system is not going to be able to handle all these folks."

If this was bird flu, killing 2,000 people a year, wouldn't state government blanket the airwaves with ads that tell people how they can prevent it and control it? Wouldn't they set up a website that tells citizens where they can get help? Wouldn't we plaster the state with billboards and posters in store windows, telling people how to prevent it?

One in six West Virginians is now diabetic, according to the 2011 Gallup Healthways poll. In 2010, the CDC estimated it

SEE EPIDEMIC, 8A



THE SHAPE WE'RE IN

GLENDA & JILL vs. DIABETES: 'WE CAN BEAT THAT OLD SUGAR'



KATE LONG | Sunday Gazette-Mail

"I've taken care of other people all my life. . . . But now it's time to take care of me."

— Glenda Blake

For 14 years, Glenda Blake has cooked at Barbour County's Good Samaritan nursing home. "I figured I'd be diabetic because most everyone in my family is, but I've found I have some control over that." Last fall, she "lucked into" sessions with Jill Weingart, one of West Virginia's few health counselors.

By Kate Long Staff writer

BELINGTON — Glenda Blake grew up in Barbour County, an ornery little round-faced girl who loved to take care of the animals on her grandparents' farm.

Her grandmother, who taught her to cook, had diabetes. Her mom had diabetes. "Everyone in our family had sugar," she said. "It was just something

SPECIAL REPORT: Diabetes can kill you 1C

I always knew about."

She figured she'd get diabetes too. "People thought, if people in your family have sugar, you will too. We didn't know it could be prevented."

As a young woman, she cared for elderly Barbour County diabetics in their homes. For the past 14 years, she has cooked at The Good Samaritan nursing home in Belington. Half the res-

idents are diabetic. "She's the person you'd want cooking for your mother," says administrator Mark Nessman.

Now she's teetering on the edge of diabetes herself. Her blood sugar waltzes up to the brink. But she has found she can do something about it. She keeps waltzing it back.

Last November, feeling depressed and tired, not sure what was wrong, she

SEE GLEND, 8A

Secret Service now assigning chaperones

By Laurie Kellman and Alicia A. Caldwell The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Embarrassed by a prostitution scandal, the Secret Service will assign chaperones on some trips to enforce new rules of conduct that make clear that

excessive drinking, entertaining foreigners in their hotel rooms and cavorting in disreputable establishments are no longer tolerated.

The stricter measures, issued by the Secret Service on Friday for agents and other employees, apply even when traveling personnel are off

duty. The policies, outlined in a memorandum obtained by The Associated Press, are the agency's latest attempt to respond to the scandal that surfaced as President Obama was headed to a Latin American summit in Cartagena, Colombia, earlier this month.

The beleaguered Secret

Service director, Mark Sullivan, urged agents and other employees to "consider your conduct through the lens of the past several weeks."

Sullivan said the rules "cannot address every situation that our employees will

SEE CHAPERONES, 9A

VOLUNTEERS

Finding closure

Search-rescue team relieved at Goble discovery

By Lori Kersey Staff writer

Two years ago, when Sheila "Kathy" Goble first went missing, members of the West Virginia K-9 Search and Rescue team helped in the search.

They scoured about 60 acres in the area near the Crooked Creek exit of Interstate 64, where her silver 2004 Honda Pilot was found abandoned on the side of the highway.

With few clues to go on, they could find no trace of the 62-year-old woman.

So, last week, when police recovered Goble's remains in the backyard of a co-worker — now charged with her death — it meant closure for her family and friends, but also relief to the search team members who tried to find her.

"It is frustrating when we don't find anything, but I'm glad the family has closure now," Jeff Cunningham, the deputy chief operations officer for the search and rescue team, said of hearing the news of Goble's discovery.

SEE TEAM, 9A

WASHINGTON FUGITIVE

Bunker standoff ends in suicide

By Gene Johnson and Ted Warren The Associated Press

NORTH BEND, Wash. — After a 22-hour standoff, police blew the top off a rugged mountain bunker near Seattle on Saturday, only to find their target — a man believed to be a murder suspect who holed up there — dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound inside.

Authorities had not positively identified the body as 41-year-old Peter Keller, who hadn't been seen since his wife and daughter were found shot to death last weekend, King County sheriff's Sgt. Katie Larson said.

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EPIDEMIC

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was one in eight.

Uncontrolled, diabetes kills people slowly and expensively, attacking most of their organs, shutting them down. Many West Virginians don't know this is an epidemic. They don't know it can be prevented.

"Type 2 diabetes is exploding right in front of us, yet people act like nothing unusual is going on. It's bizarre," said Parkersburg native Dr. Frank Schwartz, who directs Ohio University's diabetes program.

Because it's not a sudden epidemic like bird flu, it doesn't make headlines. "We've gotten so used to diabetes, we don't take it seriously anymore," Schwartz said.

West Virginia leads the nation in diabetes, according to the 2011 Gallup Healthways ranking. "This is a genuine epidemic," said Evan Jenkins, director of the West Virginia State Medical Association. "It affects a quarter-million West Virginians."

Of those, nine out of 10 have type 2 diabetes, the kind that can be prevented and controlled with exercise and weight loss. Type 2 starts inside a person's body years before symptoms appear: constant thirst, blurry vision, frequent urination, sweating, unexplained weight loss.

Overweight people can cut their risk in half if they lose 7 percent of their weight and are physically active for just a half hour three times a week, solid research shows.

"We've got to let people know that," said Beckley pharmacist Arnie Vaughn, past president of the WVa. Diabetes Educators Association. "The number of type 2 diabetics is growing beyond anything we can possibly affect if we don't get ahead of this problem."

■ Diabetes has tripled in West Virginia since 1994, according to the CDC.

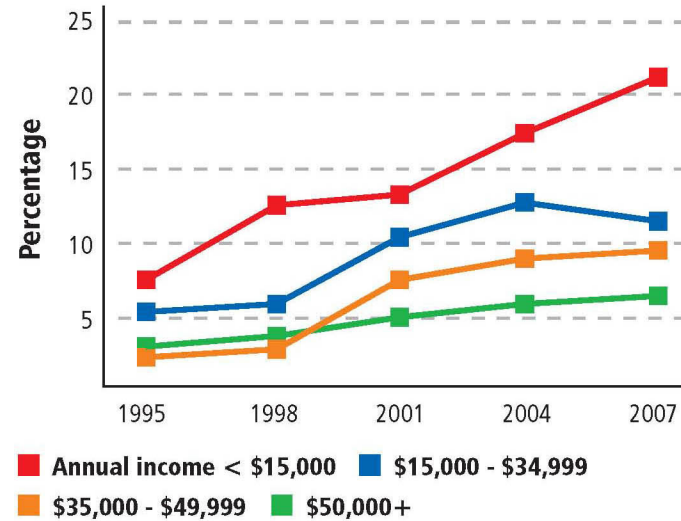
■ It already costs West Virginia more than a billion dollars a year, mostly in medical bills, according to the American Diabetes Association. It drives up the cost of everyone's health care and torpedoed the Medicaid and Medicare budgets.

■ As the obesity epidemic grows, one in three Americans will be diabetic by 2050, the CDC predicts. West Virginia will be hit harder: Many more West Virginians are already obese, adults and children, compared to the national average.

About 25 percent of West Virginia 11-year-olds already have high blood pressure, high cholesterol and are obese. Many

LOWER INCOME = HIGHER DIABETES RISK

In 2007, a person from a household that earned less than \$15,000 was more than three times as likely to be diabetic than a person from a household that made more than \$50,000. Diabetes is rising in all income groups. The prevalence increased by at least 100 percent in all groups between 1995 and 2007. For people who make less than \$15,000, it increased faster: almost 200 percent.



SOURCE: West Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (1995-2007)

more have low levels of income and education, which, research shows, puts them at greater risk of contracting all chronic diseases.

We can prevent this

"The first thing we teach in diabetes class is, you can get your blood sugar down to normal level, no matter who else in your family had it," said Pat White, director of Charleston's West Virginia Health Right. "It's up to you. We'll show you how. Exercise and diet."

Health Right serves 8,500 diabetics and has a proven track record of lowering blood sugar. People who live in the Charleston area have a choice of about six programs. But on a county-by-county map, it is clear that rural counties have the highest diabetes rates and fewer services.

Where are the West Virginia programs to help them? Nobody really knows. Nobody is keeping track.

The state's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program is housed in the cubicles of the Department of Health and Human Resources. It is tiny, with three staffers and a budget under a million dollars to combat the epidemic.

They used to have an online county-by-county list of diabetes programs, but they quit keeping it up about six years ago. "It took too much staff time to keep it current," Wood said.

Fewer than half of West Virginia diabetics (44 percent) have ever taken a class on ways they can control their disease through lifestyle changes, according to a 2010 CDC survey.

"We have some good programs in various places, but it's not clear where they are, and they're disconnected," said Delegate Don Perdue, chairman of the House Health and Human Resources Committee. Since nobody is keeping track, it's impossible to tell where the areas of greatest need are, he said.

"Access to diabetes education, care and management is limited and/or non-existent in many rural areas of West Virginia," says the website of the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. "People who are poor, undereducated, and live in rural areas are therefore more likely to have devastating diabetes consequences."

In Logan County, which has the state's highest rate, more than one in six people have diagnosed diabetes, but there are no diabetes education programs for the public, according to Logan social service sources.

"We need some kind of overarching vision of what's needed and what's working and where the greatest needs are," Perdue said.

In the face of rising statistics and need, the CDC is pushing states to create diabetes education classes statewide. Since nobody is keeping track statewide, the programs are like jigsaw puzzle pieces that may or may not fit together to create a cohesive whole, Perdue said.

Other agencies are also expanding their efforts:

■ State schools Superintendent Jorea Marple is pressing for healthier school meals and daily physical activity. West Vir-

ginia does not require daily physical education or activity in the schools, even though one in four fifth-graders is obese, and one in four 11-year-olds has high blood pressure or abnormal cholesterol, according to West Virginia University measures.

■ The state Public Employees Insurance Agency is expanding its diabetes offerings to include online prevention and control tools for its 200,000 members. In the past two years, PEIA's diabetes claims increased 44 percent. "That's quite an incentive," said Ted Cheatham, the agency's director.

■ The West Virginia State Medical Association plans to offer doctors, statewide, continuing education classes on ways to talk with patients about obesity and help them control and/or prevent diabetes. "It's a very serious situation, and it's going to get worse," Jenkins said. "Diabetes has to be attacked on many fronts."

■ Most of the state's 28 community health centers, health rights, many hospitals, and a few county health departments offer diabetes self-management help in some form and with varying consistency. Many programs started in the last three years.

■ Eighty of more than 700 state schools now have school-based health center services. Only a few are creating obesity/fitness programs for at-risk students, but they will be models for the rest.

■ The West Virginia University Extension Service plans to offer the National Diabetes Prevention Programs through some of their county offices this year.

■ Marshall University has trained people to offer chronic disease self-management classes in their communities for several years.

■ Last year, former state senator Mike Ross personally gave West Virginia University \$1 million to create a childhood diabetes program.

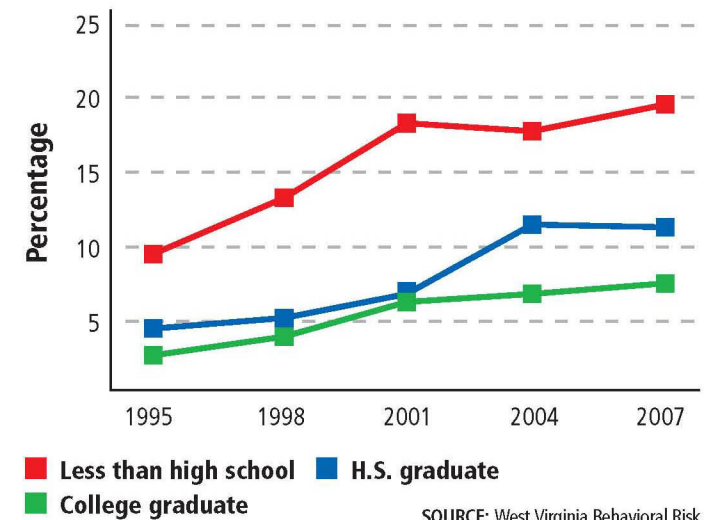
Almost all these things are in beginning stages. How do they fit together? The programs do not necessarily talk to each other. West Virginia has no state diabetes network like Kentucky has.

Without an overarching vision, Perdue said, services are likely to cluster in Charleston, Morgantown, Huntington and other cities, leaving rural people to drive a long way or go without.

"And we're still missing a lot of high-risk people, even in the cities," said White, director of West Virginia Health Right. "We need a way to reach people who don't or can't go to doctors or programs unless they have to. We need good, plain-language

LESS EDUCATION INCREASES DIABETES RISK

West Virginians who did not graduate from high school are more than twice as likely to have diabetes, compared with college graduates. The diabetes rate increased by at least 100 percent for all education levels, between 1995 and 2007.



SOURCE: West Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (1995-2007)

Type 2 diabetes: Are you at risk?

Check all that apply to you:

- excess weight
- little or no exercise
- history of heart disease
- high blood pressure
- high blood sugar
- abnormal cholesterol levels
- close relatives with diabetes
- darker skin on back of neck or armpits
- gestational diabetes
- delivered a baby weighing 9 pounds or more
- polycystic ovary syndrome

The more you checked, the higher your risk.

billboards and TV ads."

She wants billboards that say, "Even if your mama had sugar diabetes, you don't have to."

"I can't tell you how many of our patients come into their first visit and say, 'People in my family had sugar, so I'm going to get it, and there's not a thing I can do about it,'" White said. "If they believe that, they won't try."

West Virginia has two ads now, paid for by the state Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. In one, a doctor tells diagnosed diabetics to go to the doctor to get their blood sugar and feet checked. Neither ad says people can prevent diabetes or kidney disease.

"The Centers for Disease Control won't let us put prevention messages in ads until we have

Ways to prevent Type 2 diabetes:

- increased physical activity
- healthier diet
- smaller portions

Source: National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse, American Diabetes Association

prevention programs in place to refer people to," program manager Wood said. This coming year, she hopes some prevention programs will be up and operating.

"People don't have to wait for a program to start," White said. "It doesn't cost a lot of money to quit drinking soda pop and start walking. In fact, it saves you money. But we need to be telling people these things statewide."

Two years from now, in 2014, as part of federal health reform, more than 125,000 West Virginians are scheduled to get health insurance. "A lot will go to the doctor for checkups, and that may be the best prevention of all," White said. "We'll head off a lot of diabetes that way."

"But if the Supreme Court shoots it down, then we're going to be in the same situation we're in now, with tens of thousands of diabetics who can't get any insurance because they've got a pre-existing condition."

Reach Kate Long at katelong@wv Gazette.com or 304-348-1798.

Monday: Logan County: 7,000 diabetics with no diabetes education
Tuesday: "My mama had diabetes, so will I get it too?"