



YEAR OF THE COMEBACK

Manning, Peterson, Pagano bounce back **SPORTS | 1B**

CHEERS!

You can have your cake and drink it too **FOOD | 1D**

the Charleston Gazette

THE STATE NEWSPAPER — OUR 140TH YEAR

wvgazette.com



Child abuse rate tied to drugs, experts say

By Vicki Smith
The Associated Press

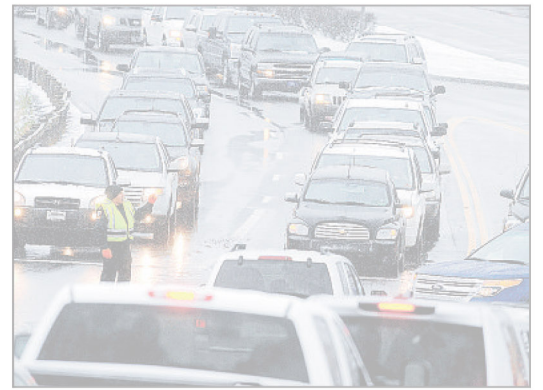
MORGANTOWN — Children are dying from abuse and neglect at a higher rate in West Virginia than any other state, a problem that

judges, social workers and others say is fueled by rampant substance abuse and likely to grow unless lawmakers get serious about finding and paying for solutions. Without a sufficient statewide safety net of suitable foster care,

adoptive families, in-home services and community-based prevention and treatment programs for addicted parents and their children, abuse victims are all too likely to repeat what they have learned. "We are headed for a whole gen-

eration of lost souls," worries Nicholas County Circuit Judge Gary Johnson, who says nearly 90 percent of the child-welfare cases he hears involve substance abuse. "We

SEE ABUSE, 13A



CHIP ELLIS | Gazette

Trace Fork traffic creates a huge bottleneck during the holiday shopping season.

Trace Fork entrance plan at a standstill

By Lori Kersey
Staff writer

A plan to put in an access road to relieve traffic congestion at the Trace Fork shopping plaza on Corridor G has stalled while state officials study traffic in the area.

The state bought property from the city of South Charleston for the possibility of building the entrance from the end of RHL Boulevard next to the South Charleston Memorial Ice Rink and down a ridge, where it would

SEE TRAFFIC, 9A

'MY MEDICAL GROUP FAMILY'



KATE LONG | Gazette photos

As 12 New River Health Clinic patients trade tips at their shared appointment, nurse practitioner Tammy Campbell-Cline (left, in red) pulls each woman aside for an individual checkup. "It's a great deal," said social worker Linda Stein (standing). "Everyone gets a medical visit and support group too."

Going to the doctor with a party of 12

By Kate Long
Staff writer

MOST people agree that prevention — exercise, good eating, regular checkups — are a major way to reduce chronic disease and obesity. But most insurance will not pay for prevention. Some health care providers are finding creative ways to provide preventive services anyhow.

SCARBRO — On a rainy November day, 12 women pile into the New River Health Clinic's recreation room for the same medical appointment. They're laughing, hugging, saying, "How've you been?"

In one corner, a nurse is giving one woman a flu shot. Off to one



THE SHAPE WE'RE IN

ONLINE wvgazette.com

Read this entire series at wvgazette.com/theshapewerein side, another woman is filling out a prescription refill request. Near the door, two women are getting

SEE NEW RIVER, 13A



Campbell-Cline checks Gladys Shepherd's lungs and heart during her individual time.

Both parties agree that corporate tax rate should be cut

By Jim Puzanghera
Los Angeles Times

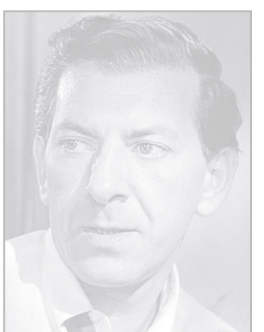
WASHINGTON — As President Obama and congressional Republicans wrangle over tax increases and spending cuts, they can agree on something: They want to lower the corporate tax rate.

The U.S. has the highest overall rate of any of the world's developed economies. It took the top spot in March after Japan reduced its rate, mimicking other countries that have lowered

SEE TAX, 13A



Charles Durning



Jack Klugman

Charles Durning, an ex-pro boxer, WWII veteran and star of "The Sting" and "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," and Jack Klugman, best known for his role as Oscar in "The Odd Couple," passed away on Christmas Eve. **Obituaries: 11A Tribute: 3D**

NEW RIVER

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their blood pressure taken. “My blood pressure’s down, but it must be the grace of God, because this has been the month from hell,” one woman says.

“Honey, maybe all that walking’s keeping your blood pressure from going out the roof,” another says.

Every three months, on the first Tuesday, all the women come to the Scarbro clinic to get checkups and catch up with each other. “These people are my medical group family,” Gladys Shepherd says, gesturing around the room.

They are clearly comfortable together. “Some of them have been sharing appointments for years,” says New River social worker Linda Stein. Ten of the 15 women have diabetes. All have a chronic disease of some kind, heart problems, arthritis, asthma. All are at least 45.

Somebody brought a curry dish. They gather in a circle of chairs, eating and trading news. Some are retired. Some take care of grandchildren. Others still work or are looking for jobs. They’ve been teachers, telemarketers, housewives, nurses,

child care workers.

“They don’t often miss,” Stein said. “They know each other’s medical ups and downs, and they care about each other’s health. They encourage each other between meetings.”

As the meeting starts, Stein hands each woman a clipboard with her blood test results. “This is all about prevention,” she said. “Everyone gets their blood work done the week before the meeting. If they’re due for a mammogram or other tests, we put a reminder on the clipboard.”

As the women check their clipboards, Stein puts up a big grid with everyone’s latest blood sugar, blood pressure, triglycerides and cholesterol. One by one, each woman talks about the past three months and her health. The stress of dying relatives, busted pipes, divorce and domestic violence get mixed in with medical details, along with “pray for me,” comfortable laughing, advice and “Thank you, sisters.”

Support groups are one of the most powerful ways to help people get a grip on — and prevent — diseases like diabetes, research says, but medical providers don’t often offer them because insurance won’t reimburse for them. New River

WHAT’S ONE THING YOU CAN DO THIS WINTER TO STAY HEALTHY?

New River Health Clinic’s Tuesday group went around the circle and threw in answers to that question:

- I walk up and down my stairs six times, morning and evening.
- I walk the dog. If you don’t have a dog, get one. They make you exercise.
- I take my mother out walking.
- I drink plenty of water and eat apples, lean meat and vegetables.
- I babysit my grandkids and chase the crawling baby.
- I bundle up, get out of the house and walk.
- I walk after the noon meal. I’m working up to a half hour.
- I got an exercise bike at a yard sale.
- I quit eating bread.
- I bring a healthy dish to church dinners so I’ll have something nonfattening to eat.
- I snack in mid-afternoon to take the edge off my hunger so I won’t pig at dinner.
- I don’t eat in front of the TV. If I do, I’ll eat it all.

solved that problem by combining the support group with medical checkups.

As the women talk, nurse practitioner Tammy Campbell-Cline circulates around the room, pulling one woman after another aside for an individual checkup. She listens to heart and lungs, checks neurological response, discusses the new blood tests, and schedules further time if needed.

It’s a billable intermediate care

visit, Stein said. “If Tammy needs more time with a group member, we bill for an extended visit instead.”

Susan Simmons of Oak Hill said she wondered at first if it wouldn’t be strange to talk about your health with other people there, “but it’s been great. A regular doctor would talk with you five or ten minutes, but here you get more than a hour, and we all learn from each other. You get a whole lot more this

way. And if you need a private visit, you can get one.”

“These groups require a lot of up-front organization, but it’s worth it,” Stein said. “I do reminder calls and e-mails, so everyone will get their blood work done. But after ten years, it runs pretty smoothly.”

Today, they run five chronic disease groups and two chronic pain groups. One group specializes in black lung. “Support from others is so important, no

matter what your problem is,” Stein said.

Between January 2009 and the end of 2011, the percentage of medical group visit patients with blood sugar in the dangerous zone dropped 14 percent.

Stein and Campbell-Cline deliver little talks on self-care, then group members trade tips on ways to stay healthy when the weather’s bad. Walk up and down the stairs three times. Drink lots of water. Get down on the floor and crawl around with your grandkids.

The word “family” keeps coming up. “That’s what we are,” Shepherd said. “We meet here and talk with each other about what comes up, our sicknesses, and we share back and forth and give each other ideas.”

“I take care of myself more because of these meetings,” said Charlotte Thomas of Beckley. “Everyone has their input. And the doctor and nurse are not up there looking down at us. They’re right here with us, part of us.”

As health-care reform progresses, insurance is likely to start paying for more prevention activities, Stein said. “But we don’t have to wait. This model gives us a way to do it right now.”

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