

# County health dept. sets sights on hypertension

By ELIZABETH KURNETZ

Hypertension has become a target of efforts to expand public preventive medicine programs in Oakland County.

Also known as high blood pressure, hypertension—if untreated—can lead to heart or kidney failure or a stroke. In order to combat this problem, Oakland County is seeking federal funds for a \$125,000 a year community hypertension program, at the urging of Joseph Montante, who is both county commissioner and a medical doctor.

"I think people are consciously concerned about their health and about preventive medicine. In my 35 years of practice, one of the most common concerns of almost 100 per cent of my patients is their blood pressure," said Montante (R-Orchard Lake), chairman of the board's health committee.

"Our goals are to get the most people we can to come to program clinics for blood pressure checkups, to evaluate them properly and to make referrals to other clinics or physicians as needed," he said.

"The two most important parts of any medical program are 1) the patient and 2) the physician. Without them, you can't have a program," he added.

According to Montante, a normal blood pressure reading is 140/90. He said anything higher than 150 for the systolic or upper reading, or higher than 100 for the lower or diastolic reading, is considered abnormal and indicates the patient has hypertension.

If a diagnosis of hypertension is made, the doctor said, it usually can be controlled readily under a physician's care with diuretics and other anti-hypertensive drugs.

Otherwise, ignoring evaluation or treatment can lead to restrictive dis-

abilities, long-term chronic illness and premature death.

Montante said there are many known causes for high blood pressure but that the cause of the most common type of hypertension is still unknown.

He said hypertension can affect females as well as males and young as well as older persons. However, he said, blacks are more prone to high blood pressure than whites.

Still, it is known that as one grows older, arteries become thicker and less elastic to different degrees, depending on one's constitutional makeup, heredity and dietary habits. Hardening of the arteries can lead to hypertension.

"As the arteries become thicker and less elastic, the heart has to pump harder to move blood through the body," said Montante.

"This leads to cardiac or heart enlargement just as any muscle that is overworked enlarges. The consequence of this is cardiac failure," he said.

Montante said the idea for the hypertension control program, which would be implemented in mid-May, with funding for one year from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare preventive medicine programs.

On April 7, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners voted 20-3, to apply for the grant. Among those voting against it were local commissioners Henry Hoot (R-Troy) and Dennis Murphy (R-Novi). Four commissioners were absent.

Murphy called it "creating an empire."

"We're in the process now of negotiating with the state government for the exact amount of the grant," said Montante. He said it should be around \$100,000. The proposed program fund-

ing is nearly \$125,000. Oakland County's share would be \$19,000 or 15 per cent of the total. Of this, \$8,400 would be appropriated from county funds set aside to match federal funds while the remaining \$10,600 would come from "in-kind services," such as use of

county buildings and equipment. The largest chunk, \$106,000 or 85 per cent, would be federal funds allocated by the state.

Once the money is received and approved by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, and program em-

ployees are hired, Montante said, the program will be "implemented immediately."

To start a program coordinator, two part-time public health nurses and one part-time typist would be hired.

The details of where program clinics would be located are not complete, but Montante said most of them will be in county health departments and the remainder in schools and new locations specifically set up for the program.

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## State resumes extra weeks of jobless pay

Gov. William G. Milliken has signed an agreement which will restart and continue the Federal Supplemental Benefit (FSB) program for 52,200 unemployed FSB recipients in Michigan.

The program ended March 26, but following congressional passage and President Carter's signing of an extension bill earlier this month, FSB will continue until Jan. 31, 1978. The federally funded FSB program as now amended provides up to 13 weeks of jobless benefits to those who exhaust their regular state and extended unemployment benefits.

The MESCC will resume making FSB payments immediately. In anticipation of legislative action, the MESCC had requested that all FSB claimants continue reporting on their regular reporting day to their local MESCC offices so they could be paid retroactively for the weeks since March 26 once the program resumed.

Milliken emphasized that the extension of the FSB program does not mean that claimants will receive

more weeks of jobless benefits. Instead, the period during which FSB payments will be made has been extended, so that unemployed workers will not be cut off short of maximum benefits.

The new federal law, however, cuts the FSB program back from 26 weeks to 13 weeks on April 30.

Those claimants who were entitled to and received more than 13 weeks of FSB can continue drawing FSB up to their maximum until April 30, but starting on May 1, the maximum FSB payout will be 13 weeks.

Men that can have communion in nothing else, can synoptically eat together, can still rise into some glow of brotherhood over food and wine.  
Thomas Carlyle  
1795-1835

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