

MEDICAL
BRIEFS

Kidney cars

If your used car is more of a hassle than it's worth, the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan has a solution for you. Donate it to the foundation's Kidney Cars Program. The proceeds from the program help fund services of the NKFM, which include patient services, education and research.

Not only will you donate that unwanted vehicle and help clean up your community, but you may be eligible for a tax deduction. Call (800) 488-CARS (2277), fill out the paperwork and your car will be towed from anywhere for free! The NKFM accepts unwanted vehicles on a year-round basis. They can be running or non-running cars, trucks, motorcycles, vans or boats.

Row your boat, junior!

A new survey, commissioned by the National Marine Manufacturers Association and conducted by the Impulse Research Corporation, found that kids who boat are healthier physically and psychologically than their non-boating counterparts. The online survey was conducted with a random sample of 1,004 parents, half of whom have children who boat regularly, and have who do not.

Families who boat reported their children to be healthier than those who don't (71 percent of boaters said their children's health was excellent, as opposed to 61 percent of non-boaters). While it might seem obvious that boating can promote physical fitness, boating can also help children psychologically.

Children who boat learn to be more outgoing and less shy or introverted. They are better team players (63 percent compared to 53 percent) and tend to be more optimistic (62 percent to 43 percent) and self-confident. Boaters' children (75 percent to 65 percent) tended to be the leader more often than their peers are.

The entire survey is available online at www.discoverboating.com.

Angel award

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network extended the deadline for nominating someone who has done outstanding volunteer work for children in Michigan to June 19. The statewide "Caring for Children Angel Award" program honors outstanding volunteers in Michigan.

A panel of community leaders from across the state will review the nominations and select five finalists. From among the finalists, judges will select a Grand Angel, who will receive a \$5,000 donation to the nonprofit organization with which he or she worked. The other four finalists' organizations will each receive a \$1,000 donation. The Blues will present the donation check and a trophy to each of the five angels at a ceremony in Detroit on Nov. 15.

To nominate an individual, complete the nomination form at www.bcbam.com/angel or call the Blues' toll-free line at (800) 733-BLUE (2583). Nominations must be received by June 19. Only nonprofit charitable organizations with a tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code are eligible for donations connected with the award.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer newsworthy information including Medical Desk (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsletters (appointments/new hires in the medical field), and Medical Briefs (medical advances and new items from hospitals, physicians, companies). We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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Madonna University offers low-cost mental health care

BY LAURA COLVIN
SPECIAL WRITER

A potential solution to the high cost and inaccessibility of quality mental health care is available and open to the public at Livonia's Madonna University. Opened in early May, the new Psychological Services Clinic offers reduced-fee psychological assessment, treatment and testing to the general public, as well as to the university's students, staff and faculty.

"We wanted to create a place where people could come and receive affordable, high-quality mental health care without the limits often imposed by other facilities," said Robert Cohen, Ph.D., director of both the Psychological Services Clinic and the Master's of Science in Clinical Psychology program at Madonna.

"Often, insurance companies and community organizations place restrictions on the number of sessions a person can attend, or limits to what kinds of problems a person can be treated for. There are no such limits here," he continued.

In an effort to promote awareness and education, the clinical staff is embarking on a campus-wide campaign to dispel the negative connotations associated with mental health care.

"There are a lot of myths about mental health care, but things like depression and anxiety can lead to the deterioration of relationships and prevent a person from doing well in school or at work," said Cohen. "Years of research show that therapy helps, and helps more than medication alone."

Although it is staffed mainly by graduate students working under the supervision of doctoral-level psychologists, the clinic also provides some services from faculty members who are licensed, experienced professionals. Cohen is one of several staff members who, in addition to his work at the university, also has an established private practice.

Services

Treatment is available at the clinic for a wide range of difficulties, including depression

Please see MADONNA, C7

Comprehensive clinic: Dr. Robert Cohen, director of Madonna University's new Psychological Services Clinic, counsels a client. The clinic offers reduced-fee psychological assessment, treatment and testing to the general public, as well as to the university's students, staff and faculty.

"We wanted to create a place where people could come and receive affordable, high-quality mental health care without the limits often imposed by other facilities."

Robert Cohen, Ph.D.

Director of Psychological Services Clinic

Alcohol before bed: No Rx for insomnia

ANN ARBOR, Mich. - Many people think of alcohol as a substance that can help them relax after a long day at the office or even act as a sleeping aid after a stressful or active day.

But a drink before bed can have a serious effect on sleep, often aggravating insomnia rather than eliminating it. And for those people at risk for alcohol dependence, drinking regularly before bed, over time, could lead to dependency.

In fact, ongoing research at the Addiction Research Center at the University of Michigan Health System shows a strong relationship between alcohol dependence and insomnia, defined as trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or feeling dissatisfied with sleep. The study revealed that up to 75 percent of people surveyed who were alcohol dependent had difficulty with insomnia. However, alcohol's effect on sleep is not limited to those who are alcohol dependent.

"Alcohol disrupts sleep," says Dr. Kirk Brower, a U-M addiction psychiatrist who leads the research. "It may help people initially fall asleep, but as it wears off when blood alcohol levels drop during sleep, it will cause a person to wake up or have restless sleep."

Alcohol dependence, also affects other areas of a person's life. When a person is alcohol dependent, he or she may drink more than intended, even though there may be a desire to stop or cut down. Due to an impaired control over alcohol, that will continue to drink despite adverse consequences. Alcoholism often refers to a severe, chronic and progressive form of alcohol dependence, which wors-

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ens over time without treatment.

A vicious cycle can develop when people become dependent on alcohol to help them sleep. The alcohol may work initially, but over time, it can disrupt sleep, causing a person to feel the need to drink even more before bed to fall asleep. Ultimately, Brower says, this cycle leads to an increased use of alcohol.

"There's really a spectrum of drinking before bed," says Brower. "Some people have one drink, the so-called 'nightcap,' while others may drink more heavily, causing an even greater disruption to sleep. But sleep laboratory tests have also shown that even one drink before bed can be disruptive to sleep."

Sleeping patterns

Taking an even closer look at the effect of alcohol on sleep, Brower and his colleagues at U-M have studied the sleeping patterns of people who had been diagnosed as alcohol dependent. The study was based on the patients' self-

Please see NIGHTCAP, C7

Facts on alcohol and sleep

■ For one in ten Americans who are alcohol dependent, a drink before bed can have a serious effect on their sleep, in most cases creating insomnia rather than eliminating it.

■ A recent study conducted by the Addiction Research Center at the U-M Health System showed that up to 75 percent of people who are alcohol dependent experience insomnia.

■ Drinking before bed can develop into a vicious cycle. When one drink isn't enough to avoid sleeplessness or restless sleep, most often alcohol consumption is increased before bed to aid with sleep.

■ About two-thirds of people who undergo treatment for alcohol dependency either significantly reduce their drinking or are able to abstain from its use. Often it's necessary to correct other problems, such as sleep disorders, that may result in alcohol use to treat the dependence successfully.

For more information, visit the following Web sites:

U-M Health Topics A - Z: Sleeping Well/Preventing Insomnia

<http://www.med.umich.edu/libr/primry/life16.htm>

U-M Health Topics A - Z: What happens when you drink?

<http://www.med.umich.edu/libr/subabuse/alcohol10.htm>

U-M Division of Substance Abuse

<http://www.med.umich.edu/psych/sub/index.htm>

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>