The staff of the CAMC Ryan White Program is dedicated to providing the best possible health care for individuals infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Also called HIV, this is the same virus that causes AIDS.

Persons enrolled in the CAMC Ryan White Program receive top-quality care from an experienced, compassionate and caring team of health care professionals. With treatment, most of the individuals enrolled in the CAMC Ryan White Program are successfully managing their HIV infection and living longer, healthier lives.

Five HIV specialists provide services to patients enrolled in the CAMC Ryan White Program. HIV specialists are doctors who have completed specialized training in the management of individuals with HIV infection. The program’s “Care Team” also includes a pharmacist who specializes in infectious diseases and a registered nurse who was among the first HIV/AIDS advocates in Charleston.

Gabriel Szego, MD, is an HIV specialist and member of the CAMC Ryan White Program’s care team. During his career, he has treated hundreds of individuals infected with HIV/AIDS, most recently (since 1998) in the Infectious Disease Outpatient Clinic at CAMC Memorial Hospital. He completed HIV fellowship training as a Nicholas A. Rango HIV Scholar at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in New York City.

Dr. Szego is a graduate of City College of New York and received his medical degree from the University of Montpellier School of Medicine in Montpellier, France. He is certified in internal medicine and nephrology. Dr. Szego provides care to individuals enrolled in the CAMC Ryan White Program during weekly Monday afternoon clinics.

Sandra Elliott, MD, an infectious disease specialist in private practice, has been a member of the CAMC Ryan White Program’s care team since 2002. She is a graduate of Marshall University’s School of Medicine and board certified in internal medicine and infectious diseases. Dr. Elliott holds a clinic on the second and fourth Thursday mornings of each month for clients of the Ryan White Program.

Shelda Martin, MD, has served as the Medical Director for the CAMC Outpatient Clinics at Memorial Hospital for more than five years. Since 2001, she has served as the Medical Director of the CAMC Ryan White Program and provides primary care for the Program’s HIV/AIDS patients. She obtained a B.S. degree in Medical Technology and an M.D. degree from West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV. She has worked closely with Dr. Christine Teague, Dr. Sandra Elliott, and Dr. Gabriel Szego to obtain expertise in HIV care. Dr. Martin attends Ryan White Clinical Conferences and HIV updates in care sponsored by Harvard Medical School, and is board certified in Internal Medicine.

“We know so much more about HIV and AIDS today than we did ten years ago. There is so much more hope, and better medications that sometimes have to be taken only once or twice a day. We have many individuals who were diagnosed with HIV more than 10 years ago, and they’re doing great. Getting tested and getting treatment – that’s the important thing,” says Dr. Martin.

Continued on page 2
CAMC Ryan White Program’s “care team” includes five HIV specialists

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Fred Kerns, MD, is an Infectious Disease Specialist in private practice in Charleston with more than ten years experience in treating individuals infected with HIV. He is a graduate of the WVU School of Medicine and completed a fellowship in Infectious Diseases at Bowman-Gray School of Medicine in North Carolina. He currently serves as CAMC’s Hospital Epidemiologist and is board certified in both internal medicine and infectious diseases. Dr. Kerns holds a clinic on the fourth Tuesday morning of every month for patients enrolled in the CAMC RWP.

Jason Kettler, MD, recently joined Dr. Kerns in private practice, after completing his fellowship in Infectious Diseases at the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, NC. He is a graduate of the WVU School of Medicine and completed his residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown. Dr. Kettler holds a clinic on the first and second Tuesday mornings of every month for patients enrolled in the CAMC RWP.

Christine Teague, PharmD, the program director for the CAMC Ryan White Program, is a Clinical Pharmacist Specialist at CAMC. She is a native of North Carolina and a B.S. pharmacy graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She received her PharmD from the Medical College of Virginia and a Masters degree in public health from West Virginia University. She is certified in infectious disease pharmacotherapy. Dr. Teague has been working with HIV-positive clients in CAMC’s Infectious Disease Clinic since 1994.

“There is no other program or hospital in West Virginia that provides the services of five HIV specialists,” says Teague. “We have clients who have relocated here from major cities across the U.S., and they tell us the care they’re receiving at CAMC is as good or better than anywhere else.”

Yvonne Lane is a registered nurse who has worked in the outpatient clinics at Memorial Hospital since 1989. She was one of the earliest advocates for compassionate care for HIV/AIDS patients in this area, served as a member of the State AIDS Task Force for five years and has been active in an HIV Community Planning Group. Effective patient education is one of Yvonne’s greatest gifts, and she is an enthusiastic advocate for reducing risk behaviors and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Other members of the CAMC Ryan White Program’s care team include: Denise Heflin-Peyton, RN, Care Coordinator; Laura Wilhelm, PhD, Psychologist; Charin Hanlon, MD, Psychiatrist; Randy Augustine and Harriett McCormick, medical social workers; Teresa Kenney, RN; and a certified nutritionist/dietician.

The CAMC Ryan White Program serves HIV-infected individuals in 16 southern West Virginia counties, regardless of their ability to pay. For more information or to find out how to enroll, call toll-free: 1-877-565-4423.

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Take the test!
The decision to be tested for HIV is the first step in taking responsibility for yourself and the health of others with whom you may be intimately involved.

HIV testing locations
Many testing sites offer free testing, but some charge a fee. Some locations require an appointment; others accept walk-ins. Call ahead to be sure!

On the Internet you can find a list of test sites in your area by entering your zip code. Go to www.hivtest.org

By phone, you may call:
• WV AIDS/STD Hotline: 1-800-642-8244
• CAMC Ryan White Program care coordinator in Charleston: 388-9337 or toll-free: 1-877-565-4423
• National HIV/AIDS Hotline: 1-800-342-2437
• Your local county health department

SUGGESTION BOX

This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the CAMC Ryan White Program. It is intended to provide helpful information to individuals in southern West Virginia who are affected and/or infected by HIV/AIDS.

We welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas or topics for articles. Contact Barbara Joseph, outreach coordinator, at (304) 388-9979 or by E-mail at barbara.joseph@camc.org to share your suggestions or to request future issues of path.
It’s flu season...how to prevent the flu, what to do if you get sick, and “cough etiquette”

What is the flu?
The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and sometimes can lead to death. While most healthy people recover from the flu without complications, some people, such as older people, young children, and those with certain health conditions – including HIV/AIDS – are at high risk for serious complications from the flu.

Be aware of flu symptoms
The flu usually starts suddenly, and may include these symptoms:
• Fever
• Headache
• Tiredness
• Cough
• Sore throat
• Runny or stuffy nose
• Body aches
• Diarrhea and vomiting also can occur, but are more common in children.

Know the risks from the flu
Some of the complications caused by the flu include bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Children and adults may develop sinus problems and ear infections.

Know how the flu spreads
The flu spreads by coughing and sneezing and unclean hands. Adults may be able to infect others one day before getting symptoms and seven days after getting sick.

Prevent the flu
The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each fall. If you are enrolled in the CAMC Ryan White Program, call your care coordinator, Denise Heflin-Peyton at 1-877-565-4423 to discuss the flu shot.

What to do if you get sick
If you are at high-risk for complications of the flu, you should notify your health-care provider if you develop flu-like symptoms.

If you get the flu, get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco. You may use Tylenol or ibuprofen, unless you have liver or kidney problems.

Other steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, including the flu:

1. Cover your cough!
   Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze — then throw the tissue away after you use it.

2. Wash your hands!
   Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based cleaner.

3. Stay away!
   Avoid other people (as much as you can) who are sick with flu-like symptoms.

4. Stay home!
   If you get the flu, stay home from work or school. Don’t go near other people and risk making them sick, too.

5. Don’t touch!
   Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread this way.

The above information was provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Understanding Lab Results
By Tim Horn
If there is one thing every HIV-positive person has in common, it is the need for blood tests. Blood tests are one of the most important tools used by doctors, especially for HIV. Not only can these tests be used to monitor your immune system and the amount of virus in your body, but they can also help you figure how well your organs are working and if you have any other infections.

Blood test results are sent to your doctor by a lab using a laboratory report. Listed in this report are the names of tests ordered, the results, and the reference ranges. A reference range reflects what would be considered “normal” results in healthy adults, but can vary from lab to lab.

The basics
A CBC (Complete Blood Count) is the most common blood test ordered by doctors. Included in a CBC is your red blood cell count (RBC), white blood cell count (WBC), and platelet count. If any of these are too low or high, your doctor will want to do additional blood tests to determine the reason.

CD4+ cell counts
Chances are, your doctor keeps a watchful eye on your CD4+ cell count by ordering an important lab test called the lymphocyte subset. This test contains your total number of CD4+ (T-helper) cells. CD4+ cells organize the way the immune system responds to foreign invaders, including HIV. They are also the cells attacked and killed by HIV. If your CD4+ cell count is low, your doctor might put you on drugs to prevent infections that wouldn’t normally cause illness (opportunistic infections).

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Many people say that they worry too much about others’ opinions of them — often to the point of feeling anxious or depressed about what other individuals might be saying. These same worriers often wish that they could stop caring about what anyone else thinks. I’m not sure how realistic this goal is. Most of us are concerned or somewhat worried about what other people think of us. Naturally, we want others to think well of us—that we are competent, fair, honest, etc. Getting along well with others feels good and often helps us reach our goals.

However, we can become overly concerned with others’ views of us, especially when we don’t feel good about ourselves. If you believe you’re too worried about others’ opinions of you, it’s important to consider what you’re telling yourself. Perhaps you’re engaging in a thinking mistake known as “mind-reading” — assuming that you know what a person is thinking about you, when you actually don’t know. Or, you might be saying that it’s terrible if someone doesn’t like you, when maybe it’s just inconvenient.

Another person’s view of you is not a measure of your worth unless you allow it to be. To emphasize this point, you might try forcefully changing some of your “OH NO!” thoughts into “SO WHAT?!!” thoughts. Give yourself credit for your strengths, and practice learning to accept your mistakes (being human means we all make them!).

Finally, keep in mind that most people are more focused on themselves and their own interests than on thinking about you. Try this: the next time you think someone is talking about you, try writing down all the topics – besides you – that he/she might be talking about. You’ll find that this list is endless!

Wilhelm, a psychologist, is a member of the CAMC Ryan White Program’s “care team”.

### Unhelpful self-talk vs. Helpful self-talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhelpful self-talk</th>
<th>Helpful self-talk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I need everyone to like me.</td>
<td>I strongly prefer to be liked by others, but I don’t need to be liked by everyone — that’s impossible!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s awful that they say those things about me.</td>
<td>Actually, I don’t know for a fact that anything was said about me. And, if people were talking about me, I don’t like it, but it’s not awful or the end of the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t stand for anybody not to like me.</td>
<td>I wish he liked me, but I can certainly stand it if he doesn’t. I decide how much I let this bother me! His opinion of me does not determine my worth.</td>
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### Understanding lab results

Continued from page 3

It is also important to keep an eye on the “percentage” of CD4+ cells. Even if the number of T-helper cells is low, a higher percentage often means that the cells are still functioning well.

**Chemistries**

Blood chemistries are also important. These tests include your liver function tests and nutritional tests. The liver produces chemicals, called enzymes, that circulate in the blood. Two of the most common of these are the SGOT (AST) or SGPT (ALT). Hepatitis and some drugs used to treat HIV can increase these enzymes and should be watched carefully. Nutritional values include your sugars (glucose), fats (triglycerides and cholesterol), and protein. These have been shown to increase in people taking antiviral drugs.

**Viral load**

This is a separate test ordered by your doctor and is used to measure the amount of virus in your blood. This test is most often used to help determine when anti-HIV drugs should be started or switched.

**Other tests**

Other tests include those that check your blood for infections other than HIV, like hepatitis C virus (HCV). If the test finds HCV antibodies in your blood, chances are your doctor will want to keep an eye on other blood tests, including your liver enzymes.

If you have questions about your blood tests, be sure to ask your doctor for a copy of your most recent lab reports. Be sure to ask him or her about certain tests or numbers you do not understand. It’s your blood. And they’re your results.