



Pirates complete sweep of Towson – C1

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Falkland, Northwest identified for Restart program

BY SHARIEKA BOTEX
The Daily Reflector

Pitt County Schools plans to submit applications for two elementary schools to implement models that will offer more resources and flexibility to help meet students' needs.

Ethan Lenker, superintendent of Pitt County Schools, presented information on the Restart Re-

form Model during last week's Pitt County Board of Education workshop.

Lenker said applications will be submitted for Falkland and Northwest elementary schools. The idea of the program is to give the school system the opportunity to be more flexible with funding, people and curriculum so they can remodel the schools.

Travis Lewis, spokesman for Pitt County



LEWIS



LENKER

Schools, said the two schools were designated by the state as low-performing, which is a qualification for consideration

for the Restart model.

"As such, we are seeking to utilize the restart model to provide these two schools with more resources and greater flexibility to meet the needs of their student," Lewis said.

If approved, the 2017-18 school year would be a planning year, the would be implemented for the 2018-19 school year, Lewis said.

Falkland Elementary

School has a D for a school grade, and Northwest has an F, according to Lenker. The flexibility provided by the application gives the schools a chance to work on areas of improvement.

Among the considerations are starting schools earlier or later and whether to hire teachers or teacher assistants, Lenker said.

"It allows us the ability to go in and give them fo-

cus and be creative with what we have to do," Lenker said. "It does not mean people get fired or anything like that. It allows us to go in, if we want to hire teachers instead or teacher assistants we can do it."

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Facing high cost of health



PHOTOS BY JULIETTE COOKE/THE DAILY REFLECTOR

MedAssist volunteer Queajia Holley, right, goes through the bag of over-the-counter medications she gathered for Melissa Arrington during a program in which a nonprofit medical group gave away medications to Greenville residents in need on Saturday.

Giveaway helps people get needed medications

BY GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Reflector

The cost of over-the-counter medicine is an overlooked topic in the ongoing debate about health care, advocates say.

Such medications often are the first line of treatment doctors turn to when helping patients with health conditions ranging from allergies to heartburn.

But with a 45-count package of Claritin, a non-drowsy allergy treatment, costing \$26 and the heartburn medicine Zantac costing \$25 for a 65-count pack-age, some people spend as much money out of pocket purchasing these drugs than similar prescription medicines.

The struggle many Greenville-area residents face trying to keep their medicine cabinets stocked showed up en force on Satur-



Volunteers organize their assigned patient's bags of donated over-the-counter medications.

day when more than 800 people participated in N.C. MedAssist's Over the Counter Medicine Give Away Day — many arriving hours before the event opened its doors at Koinonia Christian Center. The effort gave about \$100 worth of free medicine

to each person who attended. "No one should go without medicine, and this program is enabling us to reach those who are unaware of our services," Lori Giang, N.C. MedAssist executive director, said.

The event was hosted by

Access East and Koinonia; Vidant Health Foundation sponsored the event, which made \$120,000 worth of medicine available.

Participants received a form listing available medicines and selected the 10 they needed most. Volunteers then "shopped" for the items, collecting them from the stacks set up in another room. Volunteer pharmacists and other medical personnel were on hand to answer questions, Young said.

The categories included cough, cold and flu; allergy; pain relief; digestive aids; laxative and hemorrhoid treatments; skin treatment; family planning products; sleep aids; children's medicine; and vitamins.

"We are finding that our patients and our participants want to be preventative, they

See OTC, A5

Lawsuit unleashed on dog food companies

Lawyers say prescription dog food doesn't contain any medicine.

BY BETH VELLIQUETTE
The Daily Reflector

Some of the largest pet food suppliers in the country have been overcharging pet owners by charging more for prescription dog food when it doesn't actually include any medicine, according to a Greenville lawyer who is working on a class-action lawsuit against those pet food manufacturers.

Lynwood Evans, a lawyer at Ward and Smith P.A.'s Greenville office, is working on the lawsuit along with other Ward and Smith attorneys in Wilmington, as well as attorneys in San Francisco, Minneapolis and Atlanta.



EVANS

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of California last fall, is a class-action lawsuit and was filed against Mars Petcare U.S. Inc.; Royal Canin U.S.A. Inc.; Nestle Purina Petcare Co.; Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc.; PetSmart Inc.; Medical Management International Inc, which does business as Banfield Pet Hospital; and BluePearl Vet. LLC.

The lawsuit claims that the prescription dog foods include: Hill's Prescription Diet, Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets, Royal Canin Veterinary Diet and Iams Veterinary Formula.

The suit claims that the dog food companies sell prescription dog foods that do not actually contain any medicine or other ingredients that would require a prescription.

"In selling prescription pet food, defendants are taking advantage and betraying the trust of vulnerable pet owners concerned about the health of their pets, and are preying on the known propensities of consumers to love their pets and trust their vets," the suit states.

Their marketing and labeling is deceptive, collusive and in violation of federal antitrust law and various state consumer-protection laws, the suit states.

The ingredients in the prescription dog food are the same as non-prescription dog food, but pet owners are paying much more for it than non-prescription food, Evans said.

See LAWSUIT, A5

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Lottery

Pick 3: 7-8-4 Pick 4: 2-7-3-2 (day)
Saturday night drawings
Pick 3: 7-0-3 Pick 4: 2-8-6-4
Cash 5: 1-4-16-18-26
Powerball: 18-31-32-45-48-16

Weather



Today: 79, warm
Tonight: 59, cloudy

Forecast on A2



Katelyn Limberis, The Oakwood School

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OTC

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want to have those vitamins, they want to take that allergy medicine because they don't want to go to emergency room," Young said.

"But a bottle of fish oil (which contains Omega-3 fatty acids, nutrients important in managing heart disease) can cost up to \$25," she said.

The event was supposed to start at 9 a.m., but when N.C. MedAssist staff and volunteers arrived at 7, people already were waiting in their cars; by 7:30, a line was wrapping around the corner of the building. The decision was made to open the doors at 8:30. Within the first hour, more than 50 people had received their medicine, and another 200 were filling out the forms.

"I'm here to get medicine for cough and cold and flu and children's medicine," said Melissa Arrington, who runs the Little Willie



JULIETTE COOKE/THE DAILY REFLECTOR

MedAssist volunteer Jordan Baskett helps Zenisha Harris fill out her medical information during a program to give away over-the-counter medication to Greenville residents in need at Koinonia Christian Center on Saturday.

Center with her husband, Marvin Arrington.

"I have two kids and one on the way, and this definitely helps us out financially," Arrington said. "I've had at least five trips to the pharmacy or doctor's office this year. It's everywhere in the house."

Arrington said she and her husband coach the families they work with to

find services offered for free or lower costs so they can put the money they save toward other household expenses.

"Everybody's on a budget," she said. "Who doesn't want to save? This is a great opportunity to save."

Leonard Richardson of Greenville said he and his wife use coupons when-

ever possible to purchase over-the-counter medicine. The giveaway was a great opportunity to get more expensive items such as coenzyme Q10, a supplement believed to treat high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Richardson said the size of the crowd surprised him, especially because a majority of individuals were senior citizens.

"There are a lot of people struggling financially. They need help because they don't have insurance," Richardson said.

N.C. MedAssist received the medicine from Second Harvest Food Bank. The drugs mainly come from retailers who have to remove products because the drug manufacturers have changed the packaging or because they were not selling in certain locations, Young said.

Saturday's event was the second community medicine giveaway in three years, and 824 people received medicine. Allergy medicine was the first to

run out, Young said, not surprising given the early start to spring.

But some medicine remained at day's end, and it was given to Access East for use in its programs that provide free and reduced health care, Young said. Leftover volunteer supplies — which included breakfast and lunch food items and bottles of water —

where donated to Community Crossroads Center, Young said. At the first OTC event held in Pitt County in the spring of 2015, NC MedAssist served 320 people.

"Through the OTC partnership, we will be able to reach more and more individuals and educate them on our free pharmacy program resources," Giang said.

MedAssist offers three

programs that address the needs of children and adults: the Free Pharmacy program, the Over-The-Counter Medicine program, and the Senior Care program. MedAssist dispenses more than \$39 million worth of free prescription medication to 14,000 low-income North Carolinians each year.

Last fiscal year, N.C. MedAssist distributed more than \$1.9 million dollars of donated OTC medication to North Carolina individuals and clinic partners. This fiscal year, the organization plans to distribute more than \$2 million. For more information on the OTC Program and N.C. MedAssist, visit www.medassist.org.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com.

START SAVING TODAY!

1 21%