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Boston University



Boston University Medical Campus

Campus UPDATE

December 1991 Vol. 3 No. 11

Campus buildings smoke free

Committed to promoting a healthy environment at the Medical Center, the leaders of the Medical Campus have announced that smoking will be prohibited in Medical Campus buildings, effective Jan. 1, 1992. The campus thereby joins the University Hospital in a policy the hospital instituted in its own buildings on Oct. 15.

As an institution engaged in teaching, research and health care, the Medical Campus recognizes the serious health hazards posed by smoking and being exposed to smoke. It also recognizes the difficulty of quitting, and is therefore offering a program called "Freedom from Smoking" through the Medical Campus Office of Personnel to help those who are interested to quit.

For further information on the new smoking policy, please contact Elaine Dittmer, the manager of the Office of Personnel, at 638-4612 (x4612). □

Staffing during intersession

During intersession, the following departments will remain open at the Medical Campus:

Facilities Management: This office will be operational with limited staffing; to report problems, contact the control center, at 638-4144 (x4144).

Parking: Lot A/C will maintain the normal weekday schedule during the intersession, as will the Lot A/C and

Broadway shuttle, but they will not operate on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. For more information, contact the Office of Parking Services, at 638-4915 (x4915).

Security: This department will maintain a normal operating schedule.

Public Relations: This office will be covered to handle media inquiries. □

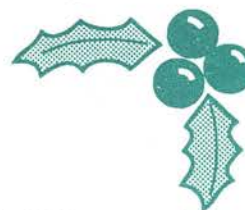


Participants in a "Freedom from Smoking" program held this past fall gathered for a final class and celebratory lunch. Pictured, from the back right: Tito Concha, a student in the Department of Physiology; Karen Cooper, Department of Urology; Lori Beason, a student in the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology; Sandy Platt, an employee relations representative in the Medical Campus Office of Personnel, who headed the program; Meaghan Skaggs, Office of Purchasing; Fernando Garcia, Department of Physiology; Isolde Gornemann, Department of Sociology and Behavioral Science.

Freedom from Smoking workshop set for January

Looking for a helping hand in an effort to quit smoking? Consider the American Lung Association's "Freedom from Smoking" program, being offered by the Medical Campus Office of Personnel. This program, lead by ex-smoker Sandy Platt, an employee relations representative in the Office of Personnel, is a seven-session program that meets once a week at the Medical Campus. The next session begins Jan. 7. The registration fee is \$20 for materials. To sign up for the program, call Sandy Platt at 638-8821 (x8821). □

Intersession rings in the holiday season



For the 17th consecutive year, Boston University will observe an intersession closing for the holiday period, from 1 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 24, 1991, through Tuesday, Jan. 1, 1992.

Employees not covered by collective-bargaining agreements will receive time off at their regular rates of pay during the intersession; those who are required to work and to perform essential services are entitled to receive compensatory time off at a later date. Represented employees' time off and pay are governed by their collective-bargaining agreements.

For more information, contact your employee-relations representative at the Medical Campus Office of Personnel, 638-4610 (x4610). □

Results of Boston CAN Share food drive prove BUMC DOES care:

The 1,502 cans donated this fall put participation up well over 100 percent from last year. "The City is just amazed," said Jim Chalmers, an employee-relations representative in the Medical Campus Office of Personnel. Chalmers headed the Medical Campus portion of the effort with help from employees in various departments.

The breakdown of can contributions:

School of Medicine:	436
Goldman School:	223
Talbot Building:	151
801 Albany Street:	32
Doctors Building:	71
Center for Human Genetics:	51
University Hospital:	538



The new biomedical research building at 609 Albany Street.

Biomedical research labs at 609 Albany Street open officially

Medical Campus departments have begun to move into the new School of Medicine research building at 609 Albany Street, which opened this month.

The six story, red brick structure is designed to provide the burgeoning Department of Dermatology with the modern and well-equipped research laboratories and office space that it needs.

It occupies five floors of the building, while one floor is used for research being done by scientists in the Goldman School of Graduate Dentistry's Department of Biomaterials research

laboratory. The Medical Campus Office of Security is relocating to the basement level. □

Construction begins on medical complex

By now you've noticed that site work has begun across Albany Street on the Center for Advanced Biomedical Research, the first structure in the University Associates complex. Heavy equipment is being used and pile-driving is under way. We will inform you about the progress of the construction in forthcoming editions of *Campus Update*. □

Weather-emergency policy

With winter upon us, employees should be aware of the Medical Campus's weather-emergency guidelines. Generally, the Medical Campus has a "no-close" policy and remains open during weather emergencies. However, in the event that an all-day closing or delayed opening proves necessary, announcements specific to the Medical Campus will be made between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. on the following radio stations: WBZ (1030 AM), WHDH (850 AM), WEEI (590 AM) and WBUR (90.9 FM). These are the only stations authorized to announce University closings and delayed openings.

During the day, the

decision to shorten the work day due to adverse weather conditions normally will be made by 3 p.m. On such occasions, the Office of Personnel will notify department heads, who, in turn, will communicate this information to their respective employees.

Employees in essential services, as determined by department heads, should report as scheduled. Essential services include, but are not limited to, Medical Campus security and facilities management.

For more information, contact the Medical Campus Office of Personnel at 638-4610 (x4610). □

SPH professor offers tips on withdrawal from smoking

For the smoker who's about to attempt quitting, there is some comforting information that could make the withdrawal process easier to bear: The worst of the urges to smoke a cigarette usually occur in the first seven days of quitting and they don't last forever. This is the expert opinion of Suzanne Slenker, Ph.D., a member of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the School of Public Health, and herself a former smoker.

Slenker, who's conducted approximately 70 clinics for people attempting to quit smoking, offers insights into what to expect and how to bear those initial weeks of real temptation. "The mental relief from the urge is a gradual process," she said. "It's in the first few weeks that it's really intense. Then there is a decline, but not a steady one. There are peaks and valleys and a gradual decline over a period of months."

A key to withstanding the urge to break down and light up is understanding that the craving to smoke a cigarette will not last indefinitely. "It helps to know that the urge has a 'life span,'" she said. While the pang feels like it is going to go on forever, it in fact will last only 10 to 15 minutes, she said. The goal, then, is to manage to distract yourself for that time period to avoid breaking down. If you can do so, you are unlikely to feel the same urge anymore, according to Slenker.

One way to avoid breaking down is to not force yourself to make the decision that you are definitely not going to have a cigarette. Avoid a "shall-I-or-shall-I-

not" confrontation with yourself. Instead, Slenker suggests, postpone the decision for an hour. Then decide. The chances are you won't feel like having one. In the meantime, she advises, "leave the room, do something else."

Withdrawal

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Caution can deter threat of crime

With the decrease in daylight, Medical Campus employees are urged to be alert for signs of crime. To report a crime in progress, call Campus security's EMERGENCY number, x5000. To report an accident after the fact, call 638-4568 (x4568).

Director of Security Richard Natoli urges employees to note the following tips for protecting themselves and their property:

- Walk with someone whenever possible.
- Avoid isolated areas and stay near streetlights when walking. Avoid shortcuts, such as alleyways or parks.
- Park in well-lit areas; parking lots often are safer than the street.
- Use the Medical Center escort service.
- Be aware of people around you.
- Keep doors locked when leaving the office.
- Check to see if anyone is in your car before you get in. Lock doors when driving. □

Safety tip:

With early sunsets and snowy days setting in, the Office of Parking Services urges people to take caution in the parking lots: Keep roadways and firelanes clear. Avoid walking through the Lot A/C entrance. Take note of the pedestrian accesses in the lots. □

New chairpersons to lead research committees

Four new chairpersons have been appointed to head the Medical Center's research committees, in response to the void left by the death last spring of Associate Dean William F. McNary Jr., Ph.D., who coordinated and oversaw a number of important Medical Center safety and research committees.

These committees are responsible for ensuring that research protocols are upheld in the laboratories at the Medical Center and for addressing safety concerns as they develop. While Michael Donovan, the executive director of personnel and administrative services, has assumed administrative leadership of the Medical Center Office of Safety, he stresses that the scientific and technical policy making and review of the research protocols will continue to be carried out by the new

chairpersons and the other members of the committees.

"We are continuing in the tradition of Bill McNary, in that the committees will continue to be led by the researchers and principal investigators who are experts in these fields," Donovan said. "The people who serve on these committees do a tremendous amount of work and make a tremendous contribution to managing the research programs and safety of the Medical Center."

These research committees generally review protocols involving research and safety matters relative to research, in conjunction with federal and state requirements. They do so in order to ensure that the operating procedures within the laboratories adhere to the highest standards of the Medical Center. "The

safety of the staff, faculty, students, visitors and members of the surrounding community is of the greatest importance to us," Donovan said.

George Bain, Ph.D., an associate research professor of psychiatry, has been appointed to chair the Biohazard Safety Coordinating Committee (BSCC), which serves as an overseeing body for the numerous safety committees at the Medical Center. With representatives from each of the safety committees as members, the committee keeps abreast of all review and approval processes of protocols and makes sure that the various research committees do not conflict in their interpretation of the various regulations. Along with the Office of Safety, the committee also is charged with responding to biohazard

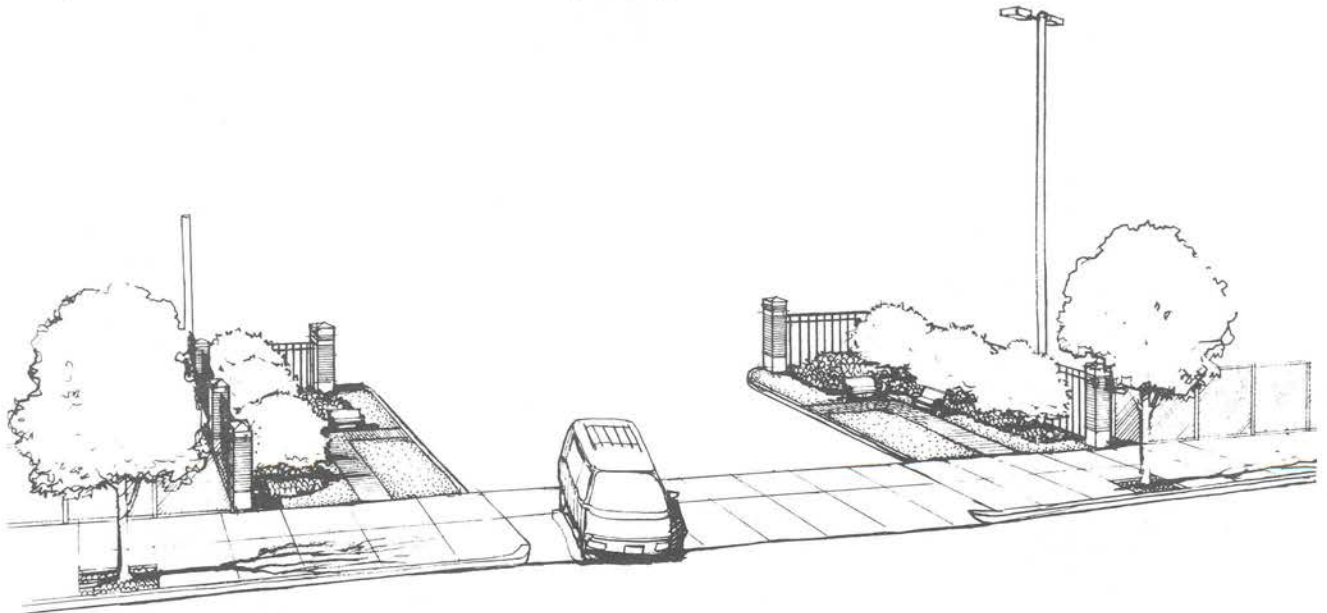
emergency situations, such as a toxic spill, if they develop. "Basically, we're the safety net," said Bain. Bain also has been named the head of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), which oversees the handling and care of animals and animal tissue.

Richard Niles, Ph.D., a professor of biochemistry and an assistant professor of surgery, is the new chair of the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), which reviews recombinant DNA applications and oversees the use of the material at the Medical Center, maintaining very close contact with the principal investigators and researchers involved in this type of research. One of the IBC's

Committees

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Two parks herald forthcoming upgrade of Albany Street



Two small parks are being created at the entrance to parking Lot A/C, heralding the start of a major upgrade of the Medical Center portion of Albany Street as part of the new University Associates medical complex project. The parks, funded and provided by University Associates, will be there for the enjoyment of the Medical Center's employees and guests, as well as members of the South End community.

"This is an invitation to the community, and a sign of the

future of what will be an absolutely beautiful medical complex," said William J. Gasper, associate vice president of the Medical Campus Office of Business Affairs. "This is the beginning of a major upgrade of the Albany Street medical complex area into a very attractive boulevard." The parks, each approximately 500 square feet, each will have two benches. Eventually, this section of Albany Street will be upgraded with new sidewalks and light posts. □

Committees uphold research and biohazard codes in labs

Committees

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tasks is to determine the containment levels of research, as required by the National Institutes of Health and by relevant state and federal laws. The committee also does site inspections throughout the year.

The Radiation Safety Committee (RSC) is now chaired by Herbert Wotiz, Ph.D., a professor of biochemistry and a research professor of urology. This group reviews all applica-

tions involving the use of radioisotopes and is responsible for developing procedural manuals for the safe use of x-ray equipment. This committee, along with the Office of Radiation Safety Protection, carries out some 1,100 inspections each year. The RSC works to ensure that all employees and staff who use isotopes are trained in their safe use and disposal.

Lawrence Zoller, Ph.D., an associate professor of anatomy, has been appointed to chair the Laboratory Safety Committee (LSC),

which is charged with implementing the laboratory safety standards throughout the Medical Center as outlined in the BUMC Safety Manual. Members of this committee oversee the proper use and disposal of chemicals and mechanical apparatus in the labs, as well as the use of controlled substances. In conjunction with the BUMC Office of Safety, this committee oversees the training of personnel involved in laboratory research.

Edward W. Pelikan, Ph.D., a professor of phar-

macology and experimental therapeutics, continues to chair the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which reviews the procedures used in human-subject research. He has chaired this committee since 1986.

"With the death of Dr. McNary, a large void was left in the overseeing of the safety committees," Donovan said. "It is a tribute to his energy and expertise that it takes so many of us to fill his shoes." □

The good news: The urge to smoke decreases with time

Withdrawal

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One of the most effective ways known to help the determined quitter through that 15-minute urge is to breathe deeply. "Smokers are used to taking deep breaths when they are inhaling, sometimes 200 times a day," Slenker said. "Suddenly they're asking their bodies to go cold turkey not only from nicotine, but from deep breathing. Deep breathing has an immediate relaxation effect." Two other tips are to leave the "scene of the urge" instead of sitting and fighting it, and to munch on something, such as a toothpick, straw or carrot.

She also advises planning a strategy in advance for high-risk situations, such as dinner parties, talking on the phone, or the moments after dinner. Strategies might include sucking on candy or straws, using positive self statements (e.g., "I chose not to smoke.") or taking a short walk.

Some people benefit from having a comrade-in-arms to go through the withdrawal process with. This might mean quitting with a friend or joining the "Freedom from Smoking" program being offered by the Medical Campus Office of Personnel. Others need to make the break from cigarettes on their own. The

American Lung Association provides information on various self-help techniques.

Just as the pangs for a cigarette will not last forever, so too are the withdrawal symptoms from cigarettes temporary, Slenker said. "None of these symptoms are terminal," she pointed out. "No one ever died from them."

Common forms of withdrawal symptoms are irritability, temporary sleeplessness or sleeping all the time, sadness, hunger and, if caffeine is being given up at the same time, headaches. Slenker suggests a variety of techniques to combat irritability: taking deep breaths, walking around the block for five to ten minutes, exercising, listening to music or taking "mental vacations," which can be facilitated with tapes. "None of these individual approaches works for everyone," she conceded, "but some will work for each person."

The sadness that sometimes accompanies quitting smoking can stem in part from the fact that when there's a big change in a person's life there's often a sense of emptiness, Slenker said. "It's a radical change in your life that's been a part of you," she said. In addition, the pacifying effect that cigarettes provide the

smoker who needs to blow off steam or to comfort himself when feeling low is no longer available. Finding a new form of alleviating stress, such as exercising or shopping, may help reduce the acute sense of a lost outlet.

Slenker suggests that people avoid alcohol during the first week of quitting because it reduces willpower and because for many people it is associated with smoking. She also urges people to begin to gradually cut back on the amount of coffee they drink because often people associate smoking with this habit. She suggests switching first to tea, which has slightly less caffeine, and then to herbal tea, which has none.

To combat the urge to eat more when quitting, which is exacerbated by the fact that food actually tastes better in a mouth not tainted with nicotine, Slenker suggests chewing on toothpicks or straws or eating carrot sticks. Besides providing a diversion, carrots supply betacarotene, a nutrient that is believed to prevent or slow down the development of cancer and one in which smokers tend to be deficient anyway. The deficiency occurs in part because smokers tend to eat less vegetables than nonsmokers, and, in part, because nicotine is

suspected of hindering the metabolism of certain nutrients.

What are the benefits of all this mental scheming? An immediate benefit is that by quitting smoking you will have improved lung capacity and more energy within two weeks. This means that more oxygen will be getting to the cells in your body. The result will be that it will be easier to climb stairs, stay on your feet longer and do more challenging cardiovascular tasks. Longer term, there will be a significant decrease in the likelihood of developing lung cancer, emphysema, cardiovascular disease and stroke, as well as pancreatic, cervical, liver and oral cancer. Quitting smoking also will improve your circulation and many other functions. □

Campus Update is published monthly by the Boston University Medical Campus Office of Business Affairs: William J. Gasper, associate vice president. Article ideas may be addressed to Mr. Gasper or to Michael J. Donovan, executive director of Personnel and Administrative Services. The publication is produced by the Medical Center's Office of Publication Services: Owen J. McNamara, director; Jennifer C. O'Brien, editor/writer; Linda Luiso, designer.