

Kidney failure increasing, but funding is still too low

By SCOTT DeJULIA
Record-Argus Staff Writer

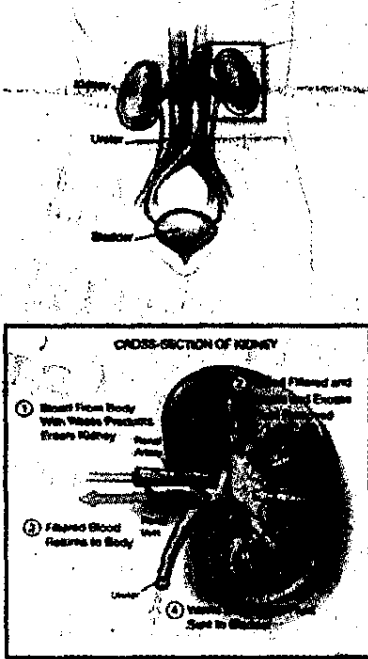
HERMITAGE — Because of the rise in obesity and hypertension in the United States, another disease is becoming more commonplace — kidney failure. When a person's kidneys stop working, toxins build up within the bloodstream and will cause death in a very short time. The only solution for most patients is kidney dialysis, which consumes a lot of time and money.

According to End Stage Renal Disease Network 4, which monitors patients with ESRD in Pennsylvania and Delaware, there are currently 13,044 patients in Pennsylvania who require kidney dialysis three times a week in order to live, and according to Schmidt Public Affairs spokesperson Alisann Fatemi, 104 of those patients were living in Mercer County in 2005.

Currently, there is a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to raise Medicare funding for ESRD by 1.6 percent. The bill has already passed the Senate.

Diane Eusanio, director of operations at Renal Care Group in Hermitage, where many of the county's dialysis patients are treated, said facilities like hers are treated differently than most Medicare-funded programs.

"Unlike other health care providers that usually get automatic increases, we have to keep going back and bugging the government," Eusanio



said.

Eusanio was glad the government was considering increases for dialysis, but it was only a start.

"It's certainly not going to make things great, but it's what they could negotiate," said Eusanio, who also said her program has not had any increases in almost 20 years.

Dialysis is only the start of what ESRD patients must endure. Eusanio said because the patients' kidneys no longer function correctly, their hormones are also affected. Dialysis patients have to take many drugs — such as Epogen, which helps stimulate red blood cell production — to live a semi-normal life.

All ESRD patients have the

potential to have kidney transplants, but a significant number of them choose not to go through the process. Eusanio said some are too ill, though all of them are offered the option.

Joan McCullough and her daughter, Mary Benson, both of Hermitage, know all about dialysis and transplants. Both suffer from polycystic kidney disease (PKD), a genetic illness which significantly shortened McCullough's mother's life. McCullough had a kidney transplant in 1987, though it has recently failed, and she is back on the transplant donor list. Benson got a kidney from her sister, who does not have the disease, in 2001 and is feeling "wonderful," in her words.

When asked about the differences between dialysis in the 1980s and in 2006, McCullough said they were few.

"The only noticeable thing is that they're reusing dialyzers now. They didn't when I was on (dialysis) before," McCullough said. "There isn't really... an overabundance of techs. There's quite a few patients for each one."

Benson's experience with dialysis was more positive than her mother's, which McCullough said left her often feeling tired.

"I couldn't believe I was in kidney failure, actually," Benson said.

McCullough takes eight medications daily, and was up

See Kidney, page 3



PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa. Line, Groundhog Punx Vaseline employees L Baker, center, as he er Deeley, right, placed hi hibit tent in Barclay Sq Wednesday This year, the official sponsor of

Publicity-s up to Punx

PITTSBURGH (AP) When throngs of people descend upon Punxsutawney to celebrate Groundhog Day, businesses and groups will try to rid coattails of the cute and dly Punxsutawney Phil to publicity.

The National Environmental Trust, for example, planning to send someone a groundhog suit to Gob Knob, where Phil is re from his burrow, who "w more his shadow and wi stead rely on global war evidence to forecast an spring."

The American Physical Society is offering ex to discuss "What P

DEATHS

ECKLEY — Ruth M., 93, Youngstown, Ohio, formerly of Greenville

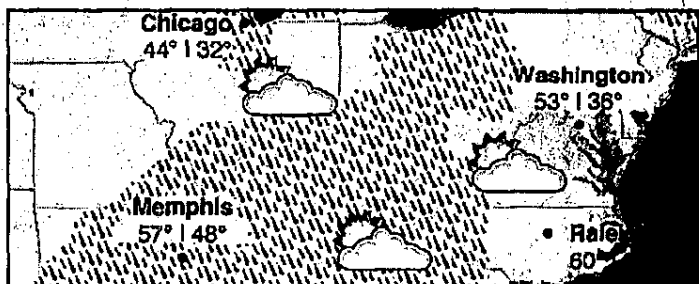
WEATHER OUTLOOK

TODAY

Mostly cloudy. A slight chance of rain showers in the afternoon. Highs in the mid 40s.

TONIGHT

Rain showers likely. Lows in the mid 30s.



IN



Ran Feb. 2, 2006

ELES (AP) — A television movie about one of the 11 airplanes was A&E's most-watched program that audiences may be ready for a coming spate of V projects dramatizing the terrorism of five years

," about the hijacking of the United Airlines plane ers' efforts to retake it, drew 5.9 million viewers ntered Monday, the cable channel said. e most-watched A&E program since the channel 1984.

e was based on public records, including phone is between passengers on the plane bound from to San Francisco and their relatives and friends. elieve the hijackers of the aircraft, which crashed a napa field, had targeted either the White House or itol.

coming projects about the day in 2001 that includ- n New York's World Trade Center and the Penta- an ABC miniseries and several feature films.

from page 1

tend to mistake Day," Johnston y. "It's not impor- t important fun."

2, thousands of scend on Punx- a town of about e located about 65 east of Pittsburgh, midwinter revelry, what had essen- German supersti-

ans believed that ing animal casts a 2 — the Christ- of Candlemas — last another six shadow is seen, spring will come

fortunately or un- able to close our important issues or a day anyway, said, noting that political and can't ay.

the club does au- e commercial use pyrighted Punx- hil. For a number 's partnered with makers of Beanie release collectible ndhogs.

definitely a need ommercialism on but we do it in a



most selective manner," Johnston said, adding the club doesn't want Punx- sutawney Phil used inappropri- ately.

Many offers are rejected, but some do fit, Johnston said.

This year, Vaseline Inten- sive Care Lotion is the official sponsor of Groundhog Day.

If Phil sees his shadow, Vaseline will reimburse, up to \$3.99, anyone who buys a bottle of Intensive Care Lot- ion on Groundhog Day.

Chances are, Vaseline will have to pay up. Phil has seen his shadow eight times in the past 10 years, Johnston said.

Johnston said the message of keeping skin moisturized fits the theme of weather — and provides organizers money for festivities, which are put on for free.

Johnston won't say how much Vaseline or any other entity is providing or exactly how much Groundhog Day costs, other than it's "shock- ingly expensive."

"But in the scope of the Super Bowl, it's a lot less," he said.

Live YOUR Life at St. Paul Homes

Living at The Ridgewood for the past two years has been a very pleasant experience. There are a variety of activities planned each day and I try to participate in the majority of them to spend time with the many friends that I have made here. The musical programs at the Ridgewood are enjoyable and refreshing and I try to attend each of them. We have a resident who plays

Glynn E. Doherty, of 613 Charleston Road, Sharpville, from Betty J. Powell, of 308A S. Shenango St., Mercer.

Jan. 18

Bartley J. Darraugh, of 797 Clarksville Road, Mercer, from Jessica D. (Montgo- mery) Darraugh, of 1585 Mer- cer-Pulaski Road, Mercer.

KIDNEY

Continued from page 1

to 18 meds while she was preparing for her transplant. Benson currently takes four prescriptions to ensure her donated kidney is not reject- ed by her body.

"You get your life back — that's the most important thing," said Benson.

Because dialysis centers are not part of a larger hospi- tal group, they often have to compete with hospitals such as UPMC for a limited pool of resources.

Sharon Kohout, Hermitage facility manager for RCG, said money coming in from the government also must be used to train technicians, who can earn more at the hospi- tals.

"There is a nurse shortage right now, so we're competing with hospitals who have a much easier starting base for their financials than we do," Kohout said.

DELINQUENT

Continued from page 1

said the same people tend to be delinquent from year to year. The county does not make exceptions based on the taxpayer's situation.

DeForest said the delin- quency rate in Mercer County is 6½ percent, though the delinquency rate in individ- ual municipalities may be higher or lower.

and Sally D. Dyer of Volant, on Jan. 17.

David J. Floch of Jamestown and Heidi S. Brandt of Greenville, on Jan. 17.

Shawn M. Diefenderfer and Makiya M. Colich, both of Mercer, on Jan. 19.

Kevin C. McEwen and Tonya L. Wheeler, both of Greenville, on Jan. 19.

Michael V. Annandonio and Kristina M. Hovis, both of Greenville, on Jan. 19.

Michael J. Hall and Ar- iane P. Hawk, both of Greenville, on Jan. 20.

William E. Saunders and Nicole A. Holder, both of Greenville, on Jan. 23.

OBIT DEADLINE

The Record-Argus obituary deadline is 7 p.m. the day before publication.

GREENV. Post

FRIDAY'S

BAKED, BROIL

with 2 Sides

with Salad Ba

• Extend Soup &

includes Soups

Bread, Garden

• Pot Roast Dir

• Hot Turkey Sar

PARTY AND FACILITIES

SERVIN

FRI. 11:30

CONNEAU

FOR INFORMATION

The Hit Of Las Vegas CHIPPENDALE Come See Professional Male Dancers From LA Appearing Live at Draw Bar & Greenville, PA Saturday, February 11th - 9-11 p. LADIES 7 Men Live on Stage!!! Ladies, Don't Wait, Get Your Tickets. This Show is Selling Out Fast!!! CALL NOW!!! 724-588-500

Humane Society of Mercer VALENTINE'S BACK TO THE OLD BUILDING FUNDRAISE FEBRUARY 10, 20 Hickory V.F.W. Post featuring: Back by popular demand - Pittsb WILLIAM DELL AND WEI (with full band) Price: \$25.00 per persc Buffet: 6 p.m. until 7:30 p Entertainment: 8 p.m. until n FUN FOR ALL

