La. Physicians Testify On Smoking and Health

Two witnesses from the Louisiana Division testified before the National Commission on Smoking and Public Policy at a regional forum in Denver in May.

Dr. Alton Ochsner and Dr. George T. Schneider, both of Ochsner Foundation Hospital in New Orleans, were two of the main witnesses at the forum which was held in order to gather nationwide testimony to develop a public mandate against cigarette smoking. The Commission is part of the Society's new anti-smoking program called "Target 5."

"The use of tobacco is the greatest public health hazard in the United States," declared Dr. Ochsner who was the lead witness at the forum. "The evidence now is so overwhelming that it must be accepted. In addition to cancer of the lung, there is a definite relationship between the incidence of smoking and cancer of the lip, tongue, mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, bladder and pancreas."

He added that the use of tobacco is the principal cause of cardiovascular disease and is a major factor in premature aging, premature death and disabling diseases.

The effects of cigarette smoking in pregnancy was discussed by Dr. Schneider, an obstetrician and gynecologist. His testimony included information on studies showing that infants of mothers who smoked were shorter in length and had significantly decreased birth rates than those of nonsmoking mothers. In addition studies have shown there is a higher spontaneous abortion rate and higher still-birth rate among smoking mothers.

Another study cited by Dr. (Continued on p. 4)

Dr. Krementz Named ACS Clinical Professor

Dr. Edward T. Krementz, professor of surgery at Tulane University School of Medicine has been named the American Cancer Society's Professor of Clinical Oncology at that institution.

The professorship is one of 15 such positions supported by various divisions of the Society. Dr. Krementz's application was first approved by the Louisiana Division's professional education committee and board of directors before being reviewed and approved by the National Society's board.

The purpose of the position is to bring about more effective management of cancer patients by improving cancer teaching in the medical school. Candidates for the position must have outstanding qualifications as a cancer teacher and clinician and must have a good rapport with the medical community outside of his institution.

Dr. Krementz is a member of the Louisiana Division's board of directors and serves on the professional education committee. He came to Tulane University in 1950 as an instructor in surgery and was named professor in 1961.

Division Sets Crusade Mark Early in Annual Campaign

The Louisiana Division has set a fund raising record in its 1977 crusade.

According to early June reports from units throughout the state, the Division total stands at about $686,000, nearly $10,000 more than the amount raised during all of last year's campaign.

Some 29 parishes have gone over their goals, while 27 parishes have set individual records.

Crusade reports are showing an increase in funds from special events, residential campaigns, and the Combined Federal Campaign. In addition, the sizes of contributions are generally larger.

Major special events conducted recently include bike-a-thons in Greater Baton Rouge, St. Charles and Washington parishes; the annual Pointe Coupee Antique Show in New Roads; the Hall of Fashion Ball in Baton Rouge sponsored by the Capital Sertoma Club and D. H. Holmes; Lafayette Parish's Spring Family Fair; a cooking school in Alexandria with proceeds going to the Rapides Unit; the Lions Club's annual crawfish supper in St. John the Baptist Parish; and numerous other smaller events.

Parishes earning the title "Quota (Continued on p. 3)
Laetrile: the Making of a Myth

Increased promotion of the drug laetrile as an effective anti-cancer treatment will only result in needless suffering and expense to cancer patients and their families, according to a spokesman for the Society's Louisiana Division.

Dr. Edward T. Kremenz, professor of surgery and clinical oncology at Tulane School of Medicine, said renewed interest in the drug as a cancer cure or preventive measure is alarming.

"In my opinion there has never been any valid, competent scientific evidence that laetrile cures, controls or prevents cancer in humans," said Kremenz who has specialized in cancer treatment for most of his 27 years of professional experience. He serves on the Division's board of directors and professional education committee.

The compound has been repeatedly tested over the past 20 years, according to Kremenz. The NCI conducted animal tests on laetrile on five separate occasions between 1957 and 1975 with no evidence of anti-cancer effects. Four independent research centers undertook additional studies in 1975 and again found no evidence that it could cure cancer or inhibit malignant growths.

"And the most extensive animal tests ever conducted on laetrile have just been completed at the prestigious Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York," Kremenz said. "The studies show that it is biologically inert, having no effect on cancer one way or another."

Originally the promoters of laetrile theorized the drug works by seeking out a substance presumed to be found only in cancer cells which causes laetrile to release hydroxyacetic acid and selectively destroy the cancer cells.

"The theory is a good one, and it would be wonderful if it worked," Kremenz said. "Unfortunately it just doesn't work."

He added that now the promoters are voicing new theories about how the compound works.

One claim is that cancer is caused by a deficiency of vitamin B-17 and that laetrile is B-17. Kremenz said there is no such vitamin, and laetrile does not meet the qualifications of a vitamin, namely that it is required by the body and that its absence will bring on a well-defined disease.

"But the greatest danger results when people put their faith in laetrile and neglect the orthodox treatments for cancer," he said. "In treating cancer, time is essential. The earlier we can detect it and treat it, the greater the chances are for success."

"Advocates of laetrile take advantage of the fear that cancer patients have—fear not only of the disease itself but of the effects of treatment with radiation, surgery or chemotherapy," he continued. "It's easy to understand the appeal of remedies that are supposed to be painless and nontoxic. The problem is they are not effective remedies and they are not always harmless. By delaying and interfering with treatments we know are effective, laetrile is potentially lethal."

Another argument made in favor of laetrile is that there can be no harm in allowing people who are (Continued on p. 4)

More Facts about Laetrile

Some additional facts about the drug laetrile are being brought out as more and more states are taking action to legalize the compound. For instance:

* Mexico, considered Mecca by American cancer victims seeking laetrile, last year canceled its approval of the substance because the government stated that "no positive results were obtained in clinical research carried out at Mexican Center General Hospital."

* Laetrile's promoters claim it is freely available in some 23 countries.

LSU Shreveport Scientist Receives ACS Research Grant

Dr. R. Michael Wolcott of the Department of Microbiology at LSU School of Medicine in Shreveport has received a grant of nearly $77,000 from the American Cancer Society to continue his research on leukemia.

Dr. Wolcott recently transferred to LSU from the University of Alabama where he first began the project entitled "Molecular Aspects of Cell Surface Expression of TL."

The scientist described his project as a sort of reconnaissance mission.

"It's a data-gathering operation aimed at finding the cause of leukemia," he said. "Hopefully the data we publish will help others working in other areas of cancer research in developing cures."

He said a more immediate dividend may be improved methods of detection. "As we learn more about the causes, it's likely that newer and better methods of detecting cancers earlier will be developed."

The research involves injecting mice with tumor cells. Some of the mice will be able to produce antibodies through their immune systems which kill the cancerous cells while other mice will contract the disease. By studying the differences between the cells he hopes to learn why some immune systems work and others fail.

The grant is the largest of all privately-funded research projects currently underway at the Shreveport institution.

Nurses' Conference Held in Bogalusa

More than 70 nurses and nursing students attended a recent conference on breast cancer and the mystectomy patient sponsored by the Washington Parish Unit and Washington Parish Charity Hospital.

Opening the conference, which was held at the Sullivan Vo-Tech School in Bogalusa, was a look at the problems of breast cancer and the surgical techniques in controlling it presented by Dr. Robert M. Beazley of the surgical department at the LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans. He was followed by Mrs. William Ewig of Slidell who described the role of rehabilitation through the Reach to Recovery program.
Men in south Louisiana stand a greater chance of dying of lung cancer than in any other part of the country, and scientists at the LSU Medical Center are working to find out why.

A study released last year by the National Cancer Institute showed that 38 of the state's 64 parishes have lung cancer death rates for white males that rank in the highest 10 per cent in the nation. The largest concentration is located along the Gulf of Mexico coast.

Dr. Pelayo Correa, principal investigator in the study, said he hopes his multi-phase research will yield some answers or at least narrow down the list of potential causative factors as to why the state is the lung cancer capital of the nation.

The study is being conducted over the next two years through a $75,000 grant from the Louisiana Division of the American Cancer Society.

### Oral Cancer Conferences Reach 200 Professionals

Conferences held this year in four Louisiana cities have provided about 200 professionals with the most up-to-date information on the detection and treatment of oral cancer.

The Ouachita Parish Unit hosted its first such conference in Monroe in December and attracted more than 50 dentists, oral hygienists and students. Speaking on the clinical appearances and sites of oral cancer and precancerous lesions was Dr. Victor Halperin, professor and head of the Department of Oral Pathology at the LSU School of Dentistry in New Orleans.

In Shreveport, the Caddo-Bossier Unit held its second oral cancer conference in February for about 30 dentists. Dr. Ronald F. Carr, associate professor of pathology and oral pathology at the LSU Medical Center in New Orleans, addressed the audience on cancer of the mouth and related lesions. Also on the program was Dr. William P. Newman, associate professor of pathology at the medical center, who spoke on the changing picture and statistical trends in cancer.

The Rapides Parish Unit also hosted its second conference in March and featured Dr. Halperin speaking on recent observations of oral cancer and related lesions. About 40 professionals attended.

Nearly 80 dentists, nurses and other health professionals attended the conference held in May in Lafayette which also featured Dr. Halperin.

Since smoking is the main cause of most lung cancers, a study of the smoking habits of Louisiana residents will be the first thrust of the investigation. Questionnaires about smoking habits are currently being mailed to a random sample of individuals in selected south Louisiana parishes. The results will be matched against those from low-risk parishes in north Louisiana.

"We first have to find out the extent to which the high lung cancer rates are due to smoking," Correa said. "If more people are smoking in the coastal parishes, then this would be the most likely reason for the high rates. In other words, we may be merely observing a dose effect. Perhaps we will find that people in south Louisiana simply smoke more than average."

He said, however, if the surveys show the smoking habits of north and south Louisiana residents are about the same, then it can be concluded that the high lung cancer mortality is being caused by one or more outside environmental factors. These additional factors may be combining with smoking to put smokers here at a higher risk for respiratory cancer than smokers elsewhere.

American Cancer Society volunteers in the parishes being surveyed will lend their assistance following up unreturned questionnaires, according to Correa.

If the survey indicates some outside factor may be involved, Correa and his associates plan to methodically deal first with those which seem most probable.

An area which may be singled out for closer scrutiny, however, is in the marshland itself. Correa said that in addition to south Louisiana, other areas with high rates are Florida and South Carolina, states with similar marshy environments.

"It's somewhat like guilt by association," he said. "When we match the lung cancer atlas with a map indicating the parishes with a high concentration of surface water-marshland and swamps—there is a close relationship. This leads us to suspect that there is something in this particular environment contributing to the high rates."

One strong suspect would have to be pesticides, according to Correa. The chemicals used to control the mosquito problem and to which residents in these areas are exposed may be acting as co-carcinogens super-imposed on tobacco smoke.

"This problem of the high rates in Louisiana is posing a significant challenge to us," Correa said. "Hopefully we will derive some important information which will give us the direction we have to go to reverse this trend."

### Crusade Record

(Continued from p. 1)

Buster are: Caddo-Bossier, Calcasieu, Caldwell, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto-Red River, Grant, Iberia, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, Lafourche, Madison, Morehouse, Greater New Orleans, Greater Baton Rouge, Ouachita, Rapides, Richland, St. Charles, St. John, St. Tammany, Tensas, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Vernon, Washington, West Carroll, and Winn.
Smoking & Health

Schneider found that infants of mothers who smoked had significantly more admissions to the hospital for bronchitis and pneumonia during the first year of life.

He concluded by urging physicians and the American Cancer Society to educate women to stop smoking, at least during pregnancy. "The desire to allow the developing fetus to reach its maximum potential should be sufficient incentive for change," he added.

The National Commission on Smoking and Public Policy was established by the ACS National Society to gather testimony to develop a public mandate against cigarette smoking. The commission is composed of 25 distinguished men and women from the fields of science, medicine, industry, labor and public affairs.

Larynx Cancer Discussed at Meeting

Nurses from southeast Louisiana heard encouraging reports on cancer of the larynx at a seminar sponsored by the Assumption and Lafourche Parish Units in Thibodaux. Some 40 nurses and students from four area parishes attended.

Dr. Guy Zeringue of Thibodaux stressed that cancer of the larynx is a highly curable disease. Between 93 and 98 per cent of small cancers are curable," he said.

He told the nurses to approach the patient with optimism and hope and to keep in mind that the patient will survive and return to his normal life.

A New Orleans laryngectomee, H. E. Yoes, advised the nurses to try to understand the patient. "When you meet your first laryngectomee, walk in with a smile on your face and let him know you can get through to him."

The program included presentations by Terrebonne Parish School speech therapist Miss Jerri Lick, Mrs. Bobby Clark, R.N., of Nicholls State University, and Mrs. Gussie Williams of Assumption General Hospital.

Laetrile: the Making of a Myth

(Continued from p. 2)

patients, there would be no way to prevent its use by others. And if one such product was allowed, numerous others would appear, all claiming legal immunity on the same basis as laetrile.

New Iberia Conference

Features Talks on Cancer

About 150 lay people and health professionals turned out for the 14th Annual Southwest Cancer Conference in New Iberia recently.

Sponsored by the Iberia Parish Unit, the meeting included talks on the high lung cancer death rate in south Louisiana and a look at research programs being conducted at Gulf South Research Institute.

Dr. Clyde E. Landrum, a New Iberia otolaryngologist, opened the meeting on the diagnostic problems in evaluating patients with upper respiratory cancer. Dr. Pelayo Correa, professor of pathology at the LSU Medical Center in New Orleans, followed with a closely-related talk on a research project he heads which is trying to determine why south Louisiana has one of the highest lung cancer rates in the country. His project, funded by a $75,000 grant from the Division, involves a smoking survey to first determine whether or not the people of coastal Louisiana smoke more than the national average.

After lunch a special panel of youngsters from New Iberia High School presented a discussion on what every school student should know about cancer.

A talk on what is being done in the treatment of cancer in children was presented by Dr. Raphael S. Ducas of the department of Pediatrics at LSU. He was followed by Ralph Wheeler, associate director of the New Iberia laboratory of Gulf South Research Institute.

He said that laetrile advocates have carefully avoided taking a scientific approach to the compound. Instead of publishing their results in reputable scientific journals, they have taken the "publicity route" by presenting their theories and "cured" patients to the general public who cannot be expected to refute or critically evaluate their statements.

"This whole discussion and furor over laetrile could easily be resolved if the promoters of the drug would submit the proper scientific data on its effectiveness," he said, "but all studies so far have been negative. Until positive proof is made, we should not allow cancer patients to be further victimized by deceptive claims and false hope."

Tulane Scientist

Gets ACS Grant

A $43,996 research grant from the National office of the American Cancer Society has been awarded to William L. Alworth, Ph.D., of the Department of Chemistry at Tulane University.

The two-year grant supports Dr. Alworth's research project entitled "Effects of Diphenylcyclopropenon and Related Compounds on Microsomal Enzymes Involved in Carcinogenic Arylhydrocarbon Metabolism."

The experimental studies planned are designed to indicate methods of constructing anti-carcinogenic drugs.