

## Protect babies from RSV virus

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a highly contagious virus that causes respiratory infection. It looks and sounds like a cold but in babies, it can become much more serious and often requires hospitalization.

“Premature and very young babies don’t have very good immunity. If they get an upper respiratory track infection when they go home from the hospital, they don’t fight it well. Because of their size and their small airways, they aren’t able to clear the secretions,” says **Dennis Crouse, M.D.**, professor of neonatal medicine at SIU School of Medicine.

Crouse says RSV tends to occur in the winter months, November through March. It is spread by coughing and sneezing and human contact. It is not debilitating to healthy people, but it is very serious in babies.

“The primary symptoms of RSV are infection of the upper airways, bronchialitis and a lot of secretions. If the lower respiratory track is infected, they can get a serious pneumonia. Infants who develop pneumonia can get into a very severe respiratory distress, which can become life threatening,” explains Crouse.

Crouse urges parents to practice good hand washing to help protect babies from the virus. He says if an infant has cold-like symptoms, is not eating well, and misses two feedings, parents should contact their pediatrician or go to a hospital emergency room immediately.

## Trauma center donates 200 cell phones to domestic violence shelter

The Southern Illinois Trauma Center (SITC), in cooperation with Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and Memorial Medical Center (MMC) in Springfield, gathered a collection of unwanted cell phones and chargers in September. The 200-plus phones were presented to Sojourn Shelter and Services for reconditioning and eventual use by victims of domestic violence.



The phones were presented in the MMC Emergency Department by the SITC trauma director, **John Sutyak, M.D.**, SIU associate professor of surgery, and Jennifer Boyer, MMC’s director of emergency services. Candi Clouse, prevention and development director at Sojourn, accepted the donation.

A designated Level I trauma center based in Springfield, SITC is a partnership of Memorial Medical Center, St. John’s Hospital and Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. It began providing trauma care for west central and southern Illinois in July, 1999. The physical location for SITC rotates annually between Memorial Medical Center and St. John’s Hospital.

## Ewart named 2008 Teacher of the Year by Illinois Academy of Family Physicians

**Robert M. Ewart, M.D.**, associate professor of family and community medicine in Springfield, was named the 2008 Family Medicine Teacher of the Year by the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians at its annual banquet in November.

The Family Medicine Teacher of the Year Award recognizes family physician faculty who play a pivotal role in recruiting and developing the best in family medicine.

His nominator said, “Dr. Ewart demonstrates exuberance for learning. He challenges both the seasoned practitioner and the learner to improve patient care and practice quality medicine. His compassion and empathy are frequently delivered in an unassuming and quiet manner that provides the clearest form



Dr. Ewart

of role modeling.”

Ewart joined the SIU faculty in 1996. He is board certified in family medicine.

One focus of his teaching to residents and

medical students is evidence-based medicine. Dr. Ewart also sees patients at a school for physically and mentally disabled children and a federally-qualified health center in Springfield.

He has been awarded the residency’s Family Medicine Teacher of the Year Award three times.

## MEDICAL STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY



Sen. Durbin meets medical student Audrey Tanksley.

### Sen. Durbin talks with SIU medical students

U.S. Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) met with a group of medical students in November to discuss their concerns about education and health care. Sameer Vohra, '10, led the meeting along with fellow medical students Sumer Allensworth, '10, (seated above), Jennifer Creamer, '09, Sara Rubenacker, '11, Shariff Shakir, '11, Michael Sinha, '11 (seated above) and Audrey Tanksley, '09 (above).

The students expressed their concerns, and the group discussed the significant debt incurred by students, the needs of public health, and the need for preventive medicine.

"As medical students, we are the future of medicine," Vohra said. "It should be our responsibility to speak out about what the future of medicine should be."

## Coping with cancer and the winter blues

Dealing with cancer is very stressful for families, and the dreary days of winter don't help. But individuals with cancer and their families can get through those times and the winter doldrums if everyone works together.

"Communication is the key to getting through a trying time," says **Rebecca Loschen**, psychiatric social worker at SIU School of Medicine. "Families need to listen to the concerns of the person with the disease. Schedule some indoor activities that the person living with cancer enjoys and plan around their wishes and energy level."

Deciding what's most important to the person living with cancer is the first priority. If your family has some favorite winter activities, pick out the ones that are really special, she advises.

Families should involve the person who is ill and make sure they feel part of the activities. The focus should be about being together rather than the illness. If a person living with cancer or family member has serious difficulty coping with the illness, they should contact a local cancer support group, mental health counselor or family physician.

## School employees honored for service

The School of Medicine honored more than 120 employees last fall in Carbondale, Decatur, Quincy and Springfield, for a total of 2,270 years of service.

One 35-year award was presented to **Ronald A. Browning, Ph.D.**, professor of physiology. Thirty-year awards went to **Nancy Calvert**, planning coordinator in student affairs; **Gail Clark**, accountant in the comptroller's office; **Jon Holcomb**, director of research services (retired); **David G. King, Ph.D.**, associate professor in anatomy; **Jeanie Marsaglia**, purchasing officer; **Cheryl McGill**, director of patient business services with SIU Physicians & Surgeons; **Shirley J. McGlinn**, instructor in

MEDPREP; **Connie Pillsbury**, health care administrator in surgery; **Leslie Randolph**, office support specialist in the Center for Alzheimer Disease; **David E. Steward, M.D.**, professor and chair of internal medicine; **Mary Stjern**, program services specialist in psychiatry; and **Nancy S. Zimmers**, director of communications and public affairs.

Eight twenty-five year awards, 35 twenty-year awards, 31 fifteen-year awards and 51 ten-year awards also were awarded.

For more information about In Brief, contact Nancy S. Zimmers, Public Affairs ([nzimmers@siumed.edu](mailto:nzimmers@siumed.edu)) at 217-545-2155.

### Hear from the experts

The School's Speakers Bureau provides a variety of speakers to community groups for programs about medical information, medical careers or updates on the medical school. A new video program about the School of Medicine, *One Foot in the Future*, also is available.

To arrange for a speaker or tours of the medical school, call the Office of Public Affairs at 217-545-5616 weekdays, e-mail [publicaffairs@siumed.edu](mailto:publicaffairs@siumed.edu) or visit [www.siumed.edu/news/tours.htm](http://www.siumed.edu/news/tours.htm). If possible, please provide 30 days to allow time to fulfill requests.