

N.C. state colleges offer HIV testing

By College Press Service

As the HIV virus becomes more common among college students, more universities are offering AIDS testing to students.

Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., has joined forces with the N.C. State Health Department to offer free, anonymous testing for the HIV virus to students, campus officials said.

The testing is held two days every month. Students will be given a number in order to get results anonymously, and a total of 48 students will be able to get the test each month.

Previously, students had the option to have a confidential HIV test on campus, but were required to pay a \$25 fee to send the blood to the university's private lab. Now blood taken for the free test will be tested at the

state lab.

According to the health center director, Dr. William Derrick Jr., the university is not paying for the AIDS test, but it is providing the state health department with a satellite center in order to reach more people who may want an HIV test.

"They will supply the counseling," Derrick said. "We will supply the room and the ability to draw the blood."

Derrick said the testing was brought to the campus at the request of the students.

In addition to the HIV test, students will be counseled by the health department's counselors, who will discuss with students ways to reduce their chances of contracting the AIDS virus. Counseling is also available after the results so students understand what the result means and can receive

proper treatment if the result is positive.

"It's important for students to understand that even if the result is negative that they may not be HIV-free," Derrick said.

While Appalachian is offering anonymous testing, other universities are moving to confidential testing.

Duke University in Durham, N.C., also offers free HIV tests to students. The university used to record that the test had been taken, but has changed its policy to offer testing that does not appear on the students' records.

Because both of the programs are still new, university officials were unable to comment on their success. However, campus officials at both universities said the change in testing was done to simply attract and encourage more students to be tested for HIV.

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