

\$10-billion increase: Total health spending by Canada's 10 provinces for the 2005–06 fiscal year reached \$87.5 billion — an increase of nearly \$10 billion in 2 years. Spending in 2003–04 was \$77.8 billion. This figure includes federal spending, which increased by \$1.1 billion in 2004–05 and is slated to rise an additional \$3.1 billion this fiscal year.

Rubella outbreak: An outbreak of rubella in southwestern Ontario likely originated in the Netherlands, says Ontario's chief medical officer of health. Dr. Sheela Basrur said certain communities in the Netherlands have been experiencing an outbreak for 8 months. She said a visitor likely brought rubella to Ontario. As of May 12, there were 156 cases, including 3 pregnant women. The outbreak is centred at Rehoboth Christian School in Norwich, Ont., 40 km east of London. Most of the school's 650 students come from the Netherlands Reformed Congregation. The church is officially neutral on the issue of vaccination, but many of its members choose to not immunize their children; about 60% of the Rehoboth students are unvaccinated.



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Taping births: Many US doctors have stopped allowing patients to freely videotape during births because of increasing fears the tapes could be used against them in future lawsuits, says Dr. John Nelson, an obstetrician and president of the American Medical Association. The AMA has no policy on the videotaping of deliveries, but the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists advises members to discuss any limitations on videotaping during prenatal visits. In Canada, it isn't a problem yet as most hospitals prohibit videotaping any assisted or instrumental delivery. — *Janet Brooks*, Salt Lake City, Utah

disease, and chronic lymphocytic leukemia. There is also evidence suggesting a link between Agent Orange and respiratory cancers, prostate cancer and multiple myeloma. Veterans Affairs urges anyone who believes their health was affected by exposure to Agent Orange, either at Gagetown or during the Vietnam War, in which some Canadians served as peacekeepers, to call 866 555-2122 (English) or 866 522-2022 (French). Last year, Veterans Affairs approved 2 such pensions, while denying 19 other claims.

Light redefined: Cigarettes labelled as light or mild should have to adhere to the same standard as food products, say the authors of a new study (*Can J Public Health* 2005;96[3]:167-72). Using a laboratory protocol that more closely mimics actual human smoking behaviour (modified ISO) than the traditional Canadian technique (standard ISO), the authors assessed the degree to which 6 brands of "light" cigarettes produced yields of chemicals at least 25% lower than those released by "regular" products. Their yields did not differ substantially, leading Paul Gendreau and Frank Vitaro to conclude that labelling based on this protocol should be promoted. — Compiled by *Barbara Sibbald*, CMAJ



CDC

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