

# Health chief to focus on obesity

■ Terry L. Cline will also work on reducing tobacco usage and improving children's health.

and has made progress, Cline said.

But efforts to reduce tobacco use, including making all restaurants smoke-free, will continue, he said.

Obesity is not specific to Oklahoma, Cline said. He said incentives to reduce obesity are misaligned, adding that healthy foods cost more than fast foods.

"Looking at obesity most simplistically, we are talking about input and output," Cline said.

People can individually contribute to reducing the states' obesity problem by exercising and eating nutritional foods, he said.

"Really, it is not just exercise," Cline said. "It is how physically active we are."

Americans are not as active as they once were, he said, adding they are tied to televisions, games and com-



## STATE'S COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

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puters.

"Air conditioning is another factor that keeps us inside," Cline said. "We have worked very hard to create a very comfortable, accommodating environment. And that is seen as improving the quality of life on some level. Now, what we are beginning to understand is that is coming at a cost to our overall health."

He said people need to move more, which might include going and talking to the colleague down the hall

instead of sending an e-mail.

It could involve parking farther away instead of circling the parking lot for five minutes, he said.

It also includes taking the stairs instead of the elevator, he said.

"No single event is going to change that," Cline said. "But all those things cumulative can positively impact your health."

No single agency, such as the Oklahoma State Department of Health, alone can reduce childhood obesity and

increase the number of children with health care.

But several agencies working together can make a difference, Cline said.

Cline, 50, oversees an agency with a budget of \$373 million and 2,200 employees. His salary is \$194,250.

The Ardmore native holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Oklahoma and master's and doctorate in clinical psychology from Oklahoma State University.

He is the former director of the Oklahoma State Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and former state cabinet secretary of health. He left the posts in 2006 to become administrator for the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

He recently completed a

posting as health attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Iraq.

His hobbies include swimming and working on his house, built in 1935.

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BY BARBARA HOBEROCK  
World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma's new commissioner of health is focusing on obesity, tobacco and children's health.

"These are constants," said Terry L. Cline, who was appointed commissioner effective June 30. "These are not issues that are created or solved as problems easily or quickly."

Oklahoma has been engaged in a war on tobacco

# Claremore has plan for unused medication

■ Owners of out-of-date meds will soon have a remedy.

BY RHETT MORGAN  
World Staff Writer

CLAREMORE — It may be on the top of the fridge, in a bedside drawer or in the corner of a counter.

But everyone has a place where those unwanted, unused or out-of-date prescription meds pile up.

Soon, consumers here will have a remedy for the problem.

Claremore Police Department, Claremore-based Healthy Community Partnership and the Rogers County Sheriff's Office are sponsoring "Operation Medicine Cabinet" July 25 at Ne-Mar Shopping Center.

"Operation Medicine Cabinet is a drug 'take back' program designed to deter the misuse of pharmaceutical drugs, promote a safe environment for Rogers County children and promote community involvement and awareness for a better neighborhood," Cassie Sowers, Claremore's public relations director, said in a prepared statement.

From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 25, Rogers County residents can drop off their unwanted drugs at the shopping center, where law enforcement officers will transport the meds to a destruction site immediately following the event.

"From a law enforcement perspective, we're battling youngsters who have access to drugs," Rogers County Sheriff Scott Walton said in a telephone interview. "There are a lot of different scenarios.

"Mom and Dad may legitimately use painkillers on a regular basis. There's one supply. We certainly want to urge them to keep their medication accounted for and secure."

For purposes of chronicling drug use, Oklahoma is divided into six districts, with Rogers County falling into the Tulsa district.

In 2008, a total of 595 drug overdose deaths were report-

ed in the state, 266 of which were in the Tulsa district. Of those, 87 percent were from pharmaceutical drugs and only 13 percent were from illicit street drugs, such as cocaine and heroin.

From 2001-08, Oklahoma saw a 73 percent increase in pharmaceutical drug overdose deaths, according to the state Medical Examiner's Office.

Hydrocodone, oxycodone and methadone are the top

three most abused prescription drugs.

Thirteen drug overdose deaths have been reported in Rogers County since January.

Trisha DeLozier is a prevention specialist for Healthy Community Partnership, which was created through a grant by the Cherokee Nation Community Anti-Drug Network.

"We really are not trying to advocate 'Don't take pre-

scription drugs," she said in a telephone interview. "We're trying to educate on how to keep them safe."

In addition to the risk of illness or death by misuse or overdose, prescription and non-prescription drugs can threaten water sources if not disposed of properly.

"Many people feel that flushing drugs down the toilet is safer than throwing them away," Sowers said. "However, that water will

eventually make its way back into a river, stream, lake or other body of water that is ultimately a source for someone's drinking water."

For more information about the program, call DeLozier at 260-0301, the Claremore Police Department at 341-1212 or the Rogers County Sheriff's Office at 341-3535.

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