

## Bennett College STD Myths Debunked

Bennett College's Health Services aims to clear up a big myth. There is a misconception that lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to contract sexually transmitted diseases. The Lesbian Gynecological Health and HIV event will be held Monday, March 21 to address this issue.

Gynecologist Connette McMahon, from the Jones Center for Women's Health in Fayetteville, N.C., will be addressing the stigmas and misconceptions related to HIV and other STDs in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

Shaina Crudup, director of health services, says she was encouraged to do the event because she sees a need for it on campus.

"There have been things that have been verbalized to me that need to be cleared up. A lot of lesbians, not just our students but the lesbian population in general, do not realize they are also at risk for getting HIV as much as heterosexual and gay men are."

One faculty member and LGBT club advisor agrees that this health event is needed.

"I was pleased to see the school was having something this specific to lesbian health," says Dr. Yvonne Welbon, advisor for Bride (Belles Recognizing Individuality, Diversity, and Equality.)

Dr. Welbon says studies have shown that some health issues are particular to lesbians. According to [womenshealth.gov](http://womenshealth.gov), lesbian and bisexual women are at a higher risk for certain problems including depression, anxiety, and polycystic ovary syndrome.

Chenique Bonds, a senior computer science major from Roanoke, Va. says she will attend the event to support her friends.

"Even though I am straight, I have many lesbian friends. Some believe they are safe and can't contract a STD from a female. That is simply not true. "

Crudup says she wants Belles to be educated about how frequently they should get tested, how frequently they should have gynecological exams and the type of screenings they should have.

"I am excited because I think it will be a forum for that particular population that is just for them. That way they can ask all the sort of questions they want to ask."

The event was made in part by the National Council of Negro Women, Inc, Office of Minority Health's, Minority Community HIV/AIDS Partnership Grant: Preventing Risky Behaviors Among Minority College Students (MCHP). Gynecological Health and HIV will be held Monday, March 21 at 6 p.m. in the Student Union Coffeehouse. For more information contact Shaina Crudup, health services director at 336-517-2241.

By: Myeisha Essex, Senior, Journalism and Media Major