Top Stories

Floating Cemeteries
At least two dozen cemeteries across the southeast Louisiana coast are rapidly sinking or washing away because of erosion and subsidence by tropical storms such as Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and others. During a recent hurricane, although many caskets were anchored to concrete slabs, dozens still floated away and found new resting places under and between houses. Human remains became separated from the caskets in some cases. Although levees and concrete slabs were built to try to raise the ground and hold cemeteries in place, the saltwater, sand and mud from repeated storms in the Gulf have taken over. *(Associated Press, 1.3.13)* Read more about coastal impacts.

A New Kind of Prison Reform
A former prison work camp in Illinois is taking on a whole new life—as a food hub and farm incubator site. Hanna City, a shuttered facility for delinquent boys that was an Air Force radar base in the 1950s, is being transformed to help boost the local economy and supply to the region’s vast food deserts. Officials say climate change has farmers rethinking ways to grow food. New practices will help with year-round production, and hopefully lead to a new crop of young farmers. *(Grist, 12.20.12)* Read more about urban agriculture, brownfields and local gardening products.

Fried Food-Prostate Cancer Link
French fries, donuts, fried chicken—delicious! But not so fast. A new study shows that eating deep-fried foods once a week is linked to a raised risk for prostate cancer, since deep frying releases potentially cancer-causing compounds in the cooking oil or fat. There’s already evidence that these foods are linked to other cancers, such as breast, lung and pancreatic. The study indicates a connection between cancer and fast-food consumption, since most deep-fried food is eaten outside the home. *(Medical News Today, 1.30.13)* Read more about prostate cancer and treatment, prevention, and screening.

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Funding Agency News

Tuberculosis Hits Skid Row
CDC scientists have been dispatched to downtown Los Angeles’ skid row, searching for more than 4,500 people who may have been exposed to tuberculosis (TB). They have found a TB strain that is unique to Los Angeles, resulting in the largest outbreak in a decade. The homeless population on skid row is especially at risk of getting TB because they have poor hygiene and nutrition, limited access to healthcare and ongoing contact with infected people. Many of those affected are also HIV-positive, a dangerous combination since the immune system is already weakened. If left untreated, TB can be deadly. *(Los Angeles Times, 2.21.13)* Read more about TB and more about TB and HIV coinfection.

Who We Are
Hollywood, Health & Society is a program of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center, and is a free resource for entertainment writers working on health and climate change storylines. It has been funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The California Endowment, Barr Foundation, Grantham Foundation, ClimateWorks, Skoll Global Threats Fund and an anonymous donor.
Homegirl Café Helps Transition
A new study portrays the benefits of social enterprises, like Homegirl Café, for successful reentry of previously incarcerated women. The study interviewed 50 women who had been convicted of criminal charges such as attempted murder, drug trafficking, and conspiracy to commit fraud, and had worked at Homegirl Café for at least six months after incarceration. The women experienced a greater sense of belonging within their neighborhoods, a culture of acceptance, and increased internal strength and identity. Most women implemented positive changes within their own households and communities after participating in the program as well. (The California Endowment, 2.6.13) Read the press release and more about Homegirl Café and the study.

Binge Drinking in Women
Nearly 14 million U.S women binge drink about three times a month, consuming an average of six drinks per binge. This dangerous behavior puts women at increased risk for breast cancer, STDs, heart disease, and unintended pregnancy. Binge drinking was most common among women aged 18-34 and high school girls, whites and Hispanics, and women with household incomes of $75,000 or more. Proven strategies that can prevent binge drinking in the overall population can also work to prevent binge drinking among women and girls. (CDC, 1.8.13) Read the press release and more about binge drinking, alcohol use and pregnancy, and more about breast cancer.

FIGHT FOR SON’S LIFE
Aidan Peterson was born with a bilateral cleft lip and palate. Shockingly, the hospital pediatrician advised his parents to sign Aidan over to the hospital, where they would give him pain medicine and let him die of starvation and dehydration, thereby relieving his parents of medical surgeries that could bankrupt them. Aidan’s parents, Quentin and Jodie, refused to abandon him. With the help of a nurse born with cleft lip and palate herself, Aidan fed from cleft palate nurser bottles and thrived. After eight surgeries to correct his lip and associated difficulties, he is now a 15-year-old freshman in high school, so thankful that his parents fought for his life. (Life-News, 1.31.13) Read more about cleft lip and palate and other birth defects.

MEDICAL STUDENT FIGHTS FOR HEALTHCARE
Lindsi Roundy had dreams of becoming a pediatric neurologist—her multiple sclerosis wasn’t going to stop her, but not having health insurance nearly did. She was faced with the decision of quitting University of Utah’s medical school for a job with health benefits or hope to graduate before the disease got worse. Moved by the irony of an aspiring medical doctor unable to afford health care, she was given a scholarship to pay for coverage. Although she is grateful that it’s allowing her to continue in school, she’s fighting to expand Medicaid to cover the estimated 55,000 uninsured Utahns. (The Salt Lake Tribune, 2.19.13) Read more about multiple sclerosis and Medicare/Medicaid.

HIV DOESN’T EXIST IN MY WORLD
Masonia Traylor, a 25-year-old in a committed relationship, tested positive for HIV two weeks before she learned she was pregnant with her second child. Without health insurance, Traylor is terrified at the price of her medications—$3,000 a month. In hindsight, she realizes that she knew about HIV, but didn’t fully understand her risk of contracting it. It felt like it didn’t exist in her world. She feels her HIV education in high school didn’t offer crucial information about HIV, and barriers like getting to a testing facility and paying for treatments can be challenging for youth. She now dedicates much of her time and energy to raising HIV awareness in others. (CNN, 2.19.13) Read more about HIV, transmission, treatment, and testing.