

Licit, illicit drugs concern of DIC

By RICHARD SEVEN
Of the Emerald

state and local sources. Its projected budget for next year is close to \$50,000.

Whether illicit, pharmaceutical, Over-the-Counter (OTC), recreational or herbal, drugs are abundant, and the Drug Information Center (DIC) wants to "make consumers aware of all the drugs they come in contact with," according to Dale Gordon, the center's service manager.

"Our goal is to teach the skill necessary for proper use of drugs," says Gordon. "We want less misuse and abuse of all the drugs — not just the illicit."

Among the services DIC provides from its location at 1763 Moss St are: walk-in or telephone use of their extensive drug files, scheduled speakers for various groups and classes and use of the National Drug Abuse Network for any questions the center can't answer.

It also provides an anonymous drug identification service to analyze drug samples.

To use the analysis service, free to persons from Lane, Benton, Coos and Jackson Counties, a person simply calls the center for an identification number and sends a drug sample directly to the laboratory in Palo Alto, Calif. When that lab gets the results, it relays the information to the DIC headquarters. The anonymous questioner gives his or her code number to hear the results.

DIC also provides service training for professionals and para-professionals, such as White Bird Clinic, and warns the public when dangerous drugs are being circulated.

Last term, the DIC laboratory put out a news release alerting the public of a possible lethal heroin sample it had received. The sample was believed to contain a greater amount of morphine than is considered safe.

The DIC was started in 1972, when Mark Miller, the Center's current director, managed to scrape up \$800 to print a manual he had written describing emergency procedures for coping with drug overdoses.

Today the center boasts a budget of \$35,000, with funds coming from the ASUO as well as from

"One out of every eight commercials on television is advertising some kind of OTC or recreational drug, such as beer and aspirin," Gordon says. "There's a lot of deceit going on by advertisers about the responsibility of using these drugs."

Gordon estimates that floating through our society, there are approximately 250,000 OTC, 25,000 pharmaceutical, 10-12 illicit and thousands of herbal drugs.

The most popular and abused recreational drug, according to DIC findings, is alcohol.

"Alcohol has been responsible for more damage to people and property," says Gordon. "It's always been the case and it probably always will be — the way the media glamorizes drinking."

The most popular illicit drug, is marijuana. Gordon estimates about 50 percent of the people between 18-25 have at least tried the hallucinogen.

Gordon also warns some foods contain additives that can turn out to be harmful. "We'll probably find out how dangerous, if dangerous at all, they are in about 20 years."

However, he adds that the people turning to health food stores should be aware that "they probably don't always meet FDA standards."

DIC directors also plan future expansion. They are now in the process of incorporating into a state-wide network called ECO Center, which furnishes publication and technical assistance training in the proper ways to handle drugs.

DIC is also releasing new DIRECT cards which are wallet-size cards to help a person evaluate a crisis situation and provide information on what the person's medical conditions are, such as if he or she was allergic to certain drugs.

Students can call the DIC (686-5411) and have their questions answered. The center is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.



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