

Officials say alcohol program neglected

Funds fail to match needs of Indian clients

Editor's note: This is the last of a three-part series on alcoholism among Lane County Indians.

By GREG BARNETT
Of the Emerald

Officials of Eugene's Indian Programs on Alcohol and Drug Awareness say their program is underfunded and fault the state and county for neglecting the Indian community's need for alcoholism treatment.

Board Chair Jeanne Neis, Director Phil Parker and Fiscal Advisor Lorraine Potter say their program should be getting more funds under House Bill (HB) 2145, passed by the state to authorize matching funds for county alcohol and drug programs, with "priority" given to programs serving minorities.

"They give us the talk, but they won't give us the money," says Neis.

Parker says that while the law

was designed to help minorities, loopholes prevent Indian programs from getting adequate funds.

However, Neis, Parker and Potter also criticize the county Mental Health Division, which receives state and county (matching) 2145 funds, and the Mental Health Advisory Board, which previously recommended how much state 2145 money the county should request for alcohol and drug treatment programs.

Officials of the Indian Programs say their \$42,000 budget (\$37,500 in 2145 funds and \$4,500 in client fees) leaves clients' needs unmet.

They claim their budget:

- confines the program to a \$75-a-month housing facility it rents from the University with old wiring, poor insulation, problems with insects and limited space;

- limits the program's paid

staff (currently a director, counselor and secretary), making it difficult to serve women clients, provide out-client treatment and follow up on the progress of clients;

- limits the amount of recreation available to clients living at the program's center;

- makes it difficult to meet rising costs, such as food for the program's clients.

Officials in the program say the county should be giving the Indian program higher priority because of the high incidence of alcoholism among Indians. (The Southwest Oregon Indian Health Project estimates that 1,200 of the county's 3,400 Indians have a serious drinking problem.)

"The Indian people have a lot more unique problems than the dominant society," said Parker.

However, Jeff Davis, substance abuse control manager for the county Mental Health

Division, says the county is not directed under HB 2145 to give priority to minority programs.

Davis also says the Indian program is receiving an allocation similar to other alcohol programs in the county.

(Day-by-Day, a partial drop-in center, has a \$43,000 budget; Behanna House, a residential and halfway house for females, has a \$49,000 budget; and Carlton House, a halfway house for males, has a \$45,000 budget.)

According to Advisory Board Chair Alice Dugan, highest priority is given to programs that provide the most effective service. She said the Advisory Board must follow the Mental Health Comprehensive Plan, which sets specific guidelines for funding.

Program officials also criticized the Advisory Board.

Parker says he believes the

Advisory Board should have more minority members. (The Board has one minority member — an Asian.)

"When I look on the Advisory Board and I see all white people on there," he says, "I'm a little suspicious." Parker says he sees Indians, blacks and chicanos as minorities.

According to Dugan, the Advisory Board complies with the law by having one minority member. She said she becomes "distressed with the label 'minority.'" "I'm more concerned about all people as persons rather than minorities."

Dugan also says she can't remember any Indians applying to be on the Advisory Board.

Those suggesting too close a relationship between the Advisory Board and Mental Health Division are "speaking without knowledge," Dugan said.

Picketing may grow

The number of picket lines at Eugene-Springfield area food markets remains at 10 today with the chance that more lines will be added later this week.

The grocery stores are still operating under reduced hours using management and workers that were hired soon after the strike began.

The union singled out Eugene-Springfield area Mayfair markets Saturday for a strike and employers at Albertson's, Safeway and Fred Meyer stores banded together on Sunday to lock out other union workers.

The union, which has operated without a contract since Feb. 4, rejected a three-year pact that was proposed Saturday by Food Employers.

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