

Editorial

Transplant funds available and needed

The 1987 Oregon Legislature has cut funding for the organ transplant program in an attempt to allocate more money to other health care programs, thereby placing uninsured individuals who need an organ transplant in a precarious — and perhaps deadly — position.

When the Legislature cut financing for the program effective on July 1, it virtually abolished the opportunity for low-income and uninsured individuals to receive life-sustaining transplants, including heart, liver, bone marrow and pancreas.

The state welfare program still pays for cornea and kidney transplants, which are less expensive and more common than the others.

This new transplant policy, according to Janet Byrd of the state donor program, evokes concerns of a lack of access to organ transplants. The wealthy and those with medical insurance will not be affected by the state's new policy; the poor and the uninsured, however, will find that if they need a transplant, state funds will no longer be available to help them get it.

This discrepancy between the rich and poor over access to transplants demonstrates the inequalities of our health system: the rich live longer while the poor perish.

Cutting the \$1.5-million financing already has contributed to the loss of life of 7-year-old Coby Howard, who needed a bone marrow transplant but was unable to obtain one because of the change in state transplant policy. Coby Howard died of leukemia Nov. 30.

More than six others in the state have been denied state financing for organ transplants since July 1.

In response to Howard's death and the shortage of transplant resources, a low-income group of parents has begun to urge people to remove their organ donor code from their Oregon drivers' licenses. Although this ploy will raise public consciousness to the state's transplant policy, it is counterproductive. By threatening to decrease further transplant resources, the problem will only be complicated.

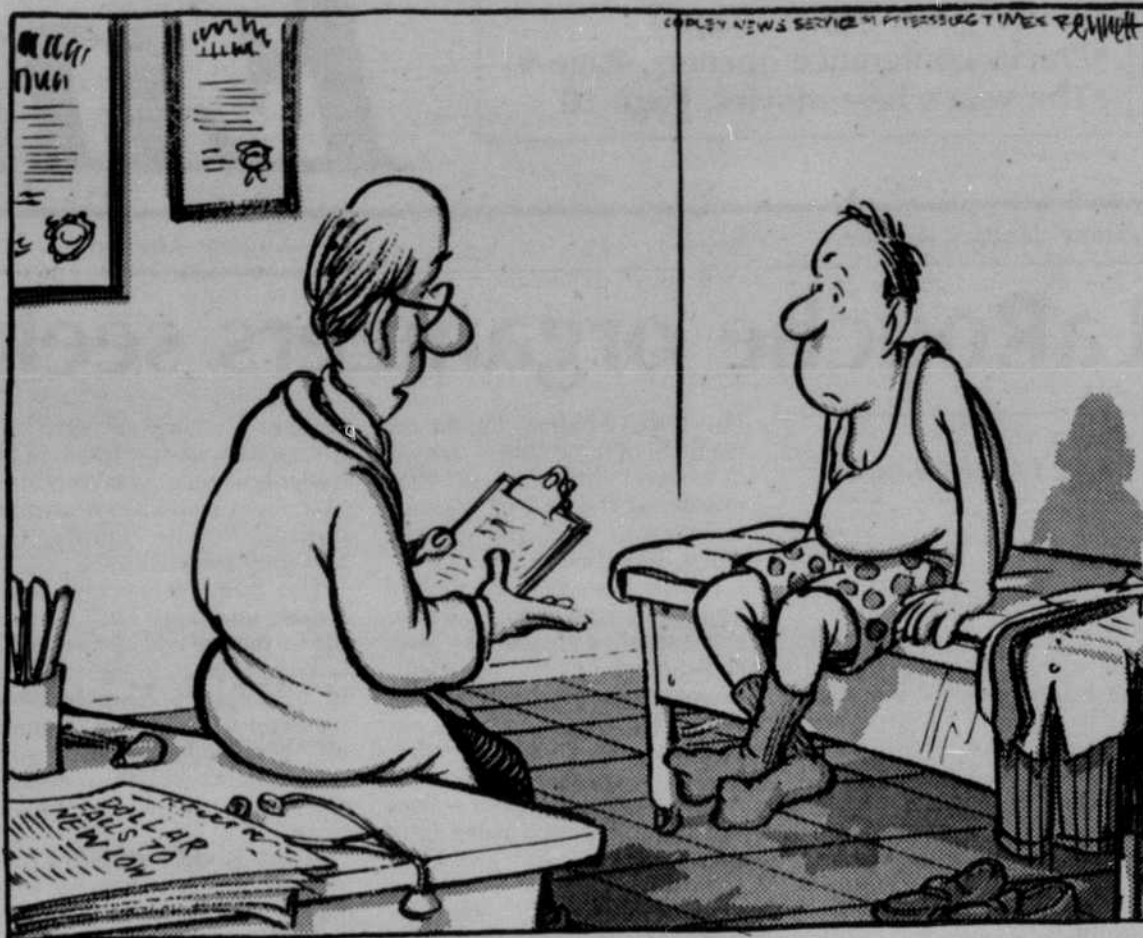
But something must be done.

Taking a step in the right direction, Gov. Neil Goldschmidt recently announced that a citizens' group would be created to advise transplant patients and their families who can't afford to pay for the costly operations. The group would provide information on how to conduct fund-raising campaigns along with other options to help facilitate organ transplant operations for the poor.

But what's really needed to solve the transplant problem is legislative action to appropriate more state funds to health care in general and transplants in particular.

Now don't say that such funds aren't available. State government currently has a surplus of more than \$144 million — and it's heading toward \$145 million. And the only thing that keeps this surplus from being used to finance transplants is a 1979 law limiting state spending.

In comparison to the \$144 million state surplus, the \$1.5 million needed to finance the transplant program for the poor is a small amount indeed. Especially considering what the \$1.5 million will buy — human lives.



Letters

Name calling

Assuming the article appearing in the local astonisher (ODE, Dec. 3, 1987, "College task force discusses possible change in the system") is representative of the task force's discussion, it would appear the oft-cited diseased thinking "the end justifies the means" has taken hold of the proponents of regional colleges becoming universities.

It also appears that much thought and consideration is given to "marketing" (often a euphemism for lying, ethically.) "Businesses want to be near a university whether it's a university or not," increasing applications and a host of other things, but nothing in the discussion appears to be concerned with the ethics of misrepresentation.

One is reminded of the ragtime hit of the 1920s, "Everybody's doing it, doing it, doing it; everybody's doing it, doing it now!"

What does it mean to misrepresent an institution of higher education to business, industry, parents, applicants, faculty and taxpayers? Which of the regional colleges (or a number of those that have elected to adopt the title "university") meet the criteria for establishing and maintaining a university?

And what disadvantage have Lewis and Clark College and Reed College experienced in maintaining the designation to which they have contributed considerable dignity and credibility?

To call North Overshoe College a university presents many perplexing situations, not the least of which is faculty concern for institutional integrity. Knowing that changing a name to a university doesn't, of itself, make one, the faculty believes it should now create fantastic financial demands in an attempt to change the myth to a fact.

The appointment of a task force in this instance seems, at best, to be rooted in political placation rather than relating to sound statewide program development.

R. N. Lowe
Counseling Psychology

Justice

The story of Lane County Presiding Circuit Court Judge James Hargreaves being called a "jerk" by Public Defender Service lawyer Bob Peters must not be dismissed by the news

media, or the Oregon State Bar lawyers will continue to deny public view of our system of INJUSTICE FOR ALL!

Judicial reform is circumvented by lawyers' "agreement regarding the importance of preserving the dignity of the court" being able to stop press investigative reporting about (1) costly/frustrating systems of justice; (2) tardy/ill-prepared lawyers; and (3) incompetent/juvenile judges.

With increased "big-lie" (tell-it-enough-and-a-lie-becomes-the-truth) TV promotion of lawyers' costly adversary system flop, our only salvation is a press exposure of the incompetent, corrupt, money-bagging Oregon State Bar disfigurement of our systems of justice.

Talking with litigants, it's universally agreed that, guilty or innocent, rich or poor, you'll be denied "due process of law" by Judge Hargreaves, under pretext of "discretionary" power, and you'll either pay a high up-front price to a private practice lawyer or suffer the lazy/incompetent public defender lawyer, as they extol their virtues while forcing you through their cleverly designed courtroom dramas of trying to satisfy illogical pleading and practice forms, built on sand-trapping court rules and metaphysically fogged-in issues that allow jerks to make arbitrary determination...with impunity/immunity!

Norman Keith Chase
Eugene

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

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