

Home birth services discontinued

Malpractice insurance costs too much

By Zaz Hollander
Emerald Contributor

The home birthing services offered by the Nurse-Midwifery Birthing Service of the Eugene Clinic, 291 W. 12th Ave., have been discontinued because of the high cost of malpractice insurance.

The yearly premiums paid by obstetricians on malpractice insurance increased from the 1984 figure of \$15,692 to the present rate of \$51,000. This is one reason that the Eugene Clinic has decided to stop home birth practice: the clinic is "interested in controlling malpractice liability," said Eva Smekans, clinic spokesperson.

Smekans also mentioned the increased risk of problems occurring during a home birth. The nurse-midwives provide the equipment and supplies necessary, but the distance between the home and medical care can be a negative factor in an emergency.

Home birth service is one of three provided by the certified midwives, who operate under the umbrella of the obstetricians at the Eugene Clinic. The other services — Birth Center and hospital birth — will not be affected by the decision, and commitments on home births before Feb. 1990 will be honored.

"We are truly sorry that we're not going to be able to continue service," said Smekans. "The decision was based on the consideration of all aspects of the program."

Although there are many families in the Eugene area who favor home birth, the Eugene Clinic approximates that 85 percent of their clients use the hospital program in which delivery is usually performed at Sacred Heart General Hospi-

tal with the assistance of a mid-wife. The remaining 15 percent is divided between home and Birth Center use.

With the discontinuation of the home option, parents who have chosen this method in the past will have two choices. One would be delivery through a lay midwife, a woman operating without Oregon medical certification. Though these midwives provide a valuable service, the risk is slightly higher when problem births occur.

As Smekans said, "Some people will choose to have home birth regardless of who delivers the baby." Such births may involve untrained husbands or friends.

Another choice is the Birth Center.

"I don't consider there to be much difference between the two," said Michelle Peters-Carr, a NMBS nurse-midwife describing the Center's comfortable, home-like atmosphere. "It's very personalized."

One midwife follows the progress and delivery of the baby throughout the term of pregnancy, but only once the mother has met certain low risk criteria.

The Center has three birth rooms, all furnished in a decidedly home-oriented style. The largest room is in the front of the quiet house. A wicker cradle hangs in the window; nearby a rocking chair sits in a sun-dappled corner. The bed is covered with a quilt, and provides ample room for any participants in the birthing process.

Orientation visits are encouraged (and free) at the Center; call 484-5796 to arrange a visit. The Nurse-Midwife Service is located at 291 W. 12 Street.

Students celebrate coming out

By Andrew Nachison
Emerald Contributor

Gays, lesbians and bisexuals on campus celebrated National Coming Out Day Wednesday, gathering for a lunchtime rally in the EMU Courtyard.

National Coming Out Day is a day gays, lesbians and bisexuals to publicly announce their homosexuality. With a theme of gay pride, about 50 people formed a circle and introduced themselves.

The rally began and ended with a song and dance to the tune of the "Hokey-Pokey."

"You put your whole self out, you put your whole self out, you put your whole self out and you shake it all about. You do the hokey-pokey and you turn yourself around, that's what it's all about," they sang.

Following the first singing of the song, some members of the circle introduced themselves and made brief comments.

Most stated how long it had been since they came out, emphasizing great pride in their homosexuality.

During the rally, one student shouted, "Out together, queer forever," and "Two, four, six, eight. How do you know your grandma's straight?"

The rally was jointly sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance, the Willamette AIDS Council and the Lesbian and Gay Law Students' Association.

"The rally today is about coming out as gays and lesbians," Amy Baker of GALA said.

"But there's kind of two different parts to it, I think. People who are out of the closet often get kind of forgotten. Today is to support people who are already out but it's also to let the people who aren't out of the closet know that it's really OK and that there is support for them," Baker said.

"This is to let the people

here at the University know that there are lesbians and gays who are a part of this campus and that we're proud to be who we are, and we are out," said James Phelps, co-director of the Lesbian and Gay Law Students Association.

"The coming out process is very difficult for anyone," Phelps said. "Since we are a minority trying to be accepted by the majority, it's a difficult process. If you can do it with a lot of people, it makes it a little easier."

One rally participant said he was a former minister, and that God loves you no matter who you are. Another participant demanded a boycott of Domi-

no's Pizza, saying that Domino's donated \$100,000 to an anti-abortion group. One woman announced she was lesbian and single.

"A lot of people feel really intimidated about coming out and we wanted to provide an opportunity for people to feel supported by their gay brothers and lesbian sisters," said Tadd Tobias, outreach director of Willamette AIDS Council.

"This rally is to let people know that we are everywhere," Tobias said. "We are your neighbors and your students and your teachers and your doctors. That is to say, I'm OK, you're OK, isn't it great to be gay?"

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, Oregon 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald is operated independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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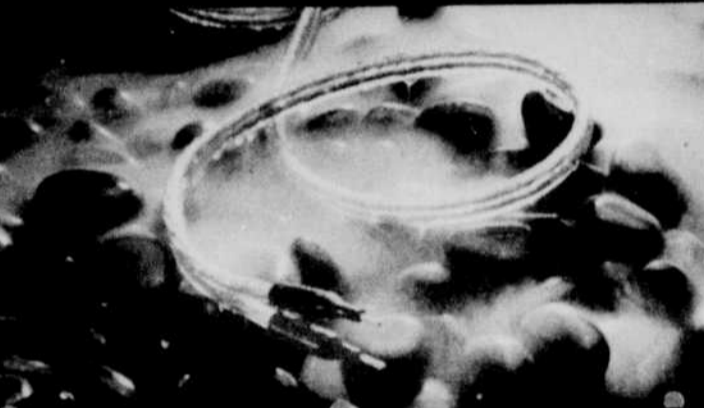
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