

State board investigating doctor's role in boy's death



NORTHWEST

(AP) — The death of a 7-year-old Eugene boy who took an antidepressant drug prescribed by his psychiatrist is under investigation by the state Board of Medical Examiners.

The board will decide whether Dr. Sue Colasurdo made improper medical decisions that contributed to the death of Bobby Jackson, said David LaDuca, the board's chief investigator.

Jackson died Jan. 5 from an apparent overdose of the antidepressant imipramine, according to *The Register-Guard*.

A story last month by the newspaper

prompted the investigation, LaDuca said. Colasurdo, who contracts with the state Children's Services Division to monitor medications for foster children, prescribed imipramine for Jackson to control sleeping problems and tantrums. The dosage was more than twice that recommended by drug manufacturers for a child of his weight, according to medical records.

Drug companies have tested and certified imipramine for use in children only for bed-wetting. But child psychiatry specialists say doctors commonly prescribe the drug for treatment of other symptoms and at doses higher than recommended.

Manufacturers' guidelines for

imipramine, which are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, recommend a dosage of 58 milligrams per day for a child of Jackson's weight and a maximum dosage of 75 milligrams per day for children.

At the time of his death, Jackson's prescription called for 150 milligrams per day of imipramine. Colasurdo also had prescribed a daily dose of 25 to 75 milligrams of Mellaril, an anti-psychotic drug intended to counteract "extreme agitation."

Pharmacy records, provided by Jackson's mother and files maintained by the Lane County mental health division, show that Jackson at one time had been prescribed for up to 175 milligrams of imipramine per

day.

When Jackson died, he was living with Norman and Doris Bolden, who operate a foster home certified by the state Children's Services Division. Both have declined to discuss their involvement with Jackson.

Colasurdo's attorney, Portland lawyer Ruth Hooper, did not return telephone calls to discuss the death or the pending investigation. A secretary in Colasurdo's office said that American Psychiatric Association guidelines prohibit Colasurdo from commenting publicly on the case.

LaDuca said the investigation could take as long as three months.

Mom takes son's truancy into her own hands

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — A mother is shadowing her truant ninth-grade son at high school to make sure he is attending classes.

"Freshman year is a transition year. If I can get him through, maybe he will go on to his sophomore year," Randi McLarrin said, holding a big ring notebook and a math book.

This school year, her son, Chris, has been suspended four times for skipping classes at Thurston High School. He's also piled up 19 detention days this

quarter for being late to class or not showing up.

Chris said he doesn't mind having his mom at school.

"It's nothing new. She's always been involved," he said, shrugging his shoulders.

"His classmates are wonderful," said McLarrin, noting that some students have started calling her "Mom."

McLarrin said she decided to attend classes with her son last week after receiving yet another phone call from the school reporting that Chris wasn't in

class.

"Every day I would get a phone call. It went that way for four or five weeks," she said.

"We were using school personnel to escort him to class or to check in with him. Finally, I said, 'That's it. I've had it,'" she said.

McLarrin sits in the back of all of Chris' classes, making sure he's paying attention and doing his work. She also goes to detention after school with him.

Teacher Diane Jeffcott said McLarrin's involvement has

helped Chris.

"He realizes his mom is serious about school," she said. "Once students see parents give up, then they feel they can give up too if they're not motivated."

McLarrin says this week will be her last at school with Chris. She believes he is on the right track now and she has again arranged for teacher assistants to escort him to class.

Chris said he's learned his lesson. If he hasn't, he knows what his mother will do.

"I'll be back," she said.

Jury still out in Salem firebombing

SALEM (AP) — A jury concluded its second day of deliberations Wednesday without reaching a verdict in the trial of three people charged with murdering two apartment residents in a firebombing last fall.

Deliberations were to resume today in Marion County Circuit Court.

Philip B. Wilson, 21; Yolanda R. Cotton, 20; and Leon L. Tucker, 22, are charged with murder, arson, assault and racial intimidation.

The victims, Hattie M. Cohens, 29, and Brian H. Mock, 45, died after two Molotov cocktails were thrown through their apartment window Sept. 26.

Daughter says accused father should go to jail

MEDFORD (AP) — The daughter of a man charged with kidnapping a 2-year-old boy from a Greyhound bus said Wednesday he once attacked her and tried to set her on fire.

"I'm praying he goes to jail and stays," said Dawn Coletti. "After all he's done, I don't care."

Gerhard Erich Coletti, 42, of Burein, Wash., was charged with kidnapping and

held in lieu of \$25,000 bail, police said.

Police said Coletti befriended Leaster Marie Baker, 23, of Kent, Wash., and her two children while they were traveling by bus Tuesday from Washington.

While the mother slept, Coletti took her son and hopped a Rogue Valley Transit District bus, Officer Mark Bell said. Coletti was arrested Tuesday in Ashland after a woman

riding on the local bus heard his description broadcast on the radio and called police.

The boy was returned unharmed to the mother, who continued her journey to Baton Rouge, La.

Dawn Coletti, 18, who grew up in the Medford area, said she got in touch with her father last fall after not seeing him since she was a small child.

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