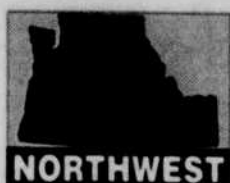


Investigation of state trooper nearly finished



SEATTLE (AP) — The Washington State Patrol says its investigation of a trooper who pulled a couple over for speeding and then tried to talk them out of an abortion may be completed next week.

It then will be turned over the prosecutor's office, which already has dismissed charges against the couple.

While the trooper may have gone "beyond the call of duty," he did nothing wrong, his attorney says.

"He did nothing legally, morally, procedurally wrong, as far as I could tell," said Seattle attorney Thomas Olmstead.

The 34-year-old trooper, who has not been identified, sought help from Olmstead, who is a member of the

Rutherford Institute, a national Christian law firm that specializes in religious issues.

"He went beyond the call of duty, but he was doing his job," Olmstead said. He did not discuss specifics, but said media accounts of the trooper's actions are "untrue."

The 20-year-old man and 18-year-old woman reportedly were on their way to a Planned Parenthood clinic for an abortion appointment July 27 when they were stopped for speeding on Interstate 90 east of Seattle.

The couple's attorney, Frank Shoichet, and Planned Parenthood officials say the trooper lectured them against having an abortion, offering to lower the fine on the speeding ticket as an incentive.

He then allegedly had the couple follow him several miles to an office that offers counseling against abortion before he let them go.

The King County prosecutor's office this week dismissed

two tickets issued to the man, who was driving, because the trooper couldn't testify, prosecutor's spokesman Dan Donohoe said.

"It would be difficult to compel someone to testify for an incident for which they're under investigation," he said.

In the meantime, Shoichet said, the incident has "hit a nerve" with the public, and he's received requests from several national television shows for appearances by the couple, who also have not been identified.

All requests have been turned down, he said.

"We are not in this to get my clients a lot of free media exposure," Shoichet said. "They are private people."

As for Olmstead's involvement, Shoichet said, "it just confirms our suspicion that the officer is an anti-abortion fanatic and he's hired another anti-abortion fanatic."

More people to be covered under Oregon health plan

SALEM (AP) — The federal government has authorized Oregon to enlarge its health plan by including more people and expanding mental health coverage.

Jean Thorne, state Medicaid director, said Thursday that officials had approved waivers of federal rules to broaden the plan's Medicaid coverage. Waivers are needed because the federal government pays most of the cost of Medicaid.

Thorne said expansion will make eligible for the plan about 67,000 people covered by traditional Medicaid, including children in foster care and people who are blind, disabled or older than 65.

The state plan also will offer more mental health and drug and alcohol dependency treatment than now provided by regular

Adding new mental health and drug and alcohol treatment to the plan's priority list will enlarge the list to 745 items, of which 600 will be covered.

Medicaid. The part of the plan expansion will be phased in, covering the whole state by July 1996.

The changes are expected to be effective next Jan. 1.

The broader coverage will mean "earlier identification and treatment for conditions such as anxiety, depression and schizophrenia," said Kevin Concannon, director of the state Department of Human Resources.

Thorne said the changes make a total of 340,000 Oregonians eligible for health plan coverage.

Oregon gained national attention by launching a program Feb. 1 that extended health care to 120,000 low-income people by paying only for the first 565 treatments on a prioritized list of 696 treatments.

Adding new mental health and drug and alcohol treatment to the plan's priority list will enlarge the list to 745 items, of which 600 will be covered.

The priority list is used to shape the plan's coverage according to available money. The state pays about 40 percent of Medicaid costs.

The rationing experiment has been applauded by many in government and medicine as a realistic way to provide basic health coverage to more poor people at a time of spiraling health care costs.

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