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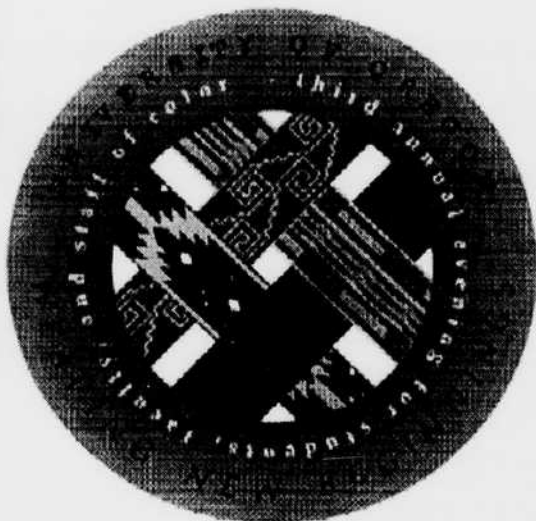
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HEALTH NEWS

Health center offers students immunizations, travel advice

Students should visit the health center at least two months before going abroad

Megan Turner
 Higher Education Reporter

For students who plan to study abroad next term or who have any other international engagements for winter break, it is time to start thinking about immunizations. The travel clinic, a part of the Student Health Center, offers all necessary immunizations as well as other materials and services.

Sharon Harbert, registered nurse and travel clinic supervisor, said most students who are going out of the country should inquire at least two months ahead of time to ensure proper immunization before travel. Harbert said this is especially true for travel to Third World countries. Hepatitis B,

which is a series done two to six months before travel, is a prominent disease in some countries.

All immunizations that are available in the United States are also available at the travel clinic, often at a significantly lower price. Some immunizations can even be 50 percent lower in cost than those at a regular clinic. Diseases such as cholera, hepatitis, measles, rabies, typhoid and yellow fever are one-time injections that are offered at the travel clinic. The malaria immunization, which is taken orally, can also be distributed to travelers.

Other services provided by the travel clinic include an up-to-date individualized travel portfolio, which contains information on the types of diseases travelers may come in contact with and in what part of the country each disease is concentrated.

Recommendations for first aid

kits and water purification, advice on preventative mechanisms for staying healthy in a foreign country and also post-travel care are all offered at the clinic.

To expedite the process of immunization, future travelers are advised to bring their travel itineraries, past immunization records and a list of current medications they are taking.

Updating routine immunizations, such as measles and tetanus, can also be done at the travel clinic. In addition, flu shots are provided for a small fee.

Harbert said immunizations are the best way students and faculty can protect themselves in a foreign land.

"Knowing is power," Harbert said. "If you don't know if something exists, you can't protect yourself from it. Our job is to have students go safe and come back safe."

Breast cancer patient sues Fred Meyer

The Associated Press

PORTLAND — A woman fighting breast cancer is suing the Fred Meyer retail chain over insurance coverage the company refuses to provide for treatment still considered experimental.

Julie Markham, 41, has been diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer, a disease so aggressive that the time between diagnosis and death often is just months.

It's so rare that it strikes only one of every 100 breast cancer victims. It's so deceptive that doctors commonly misdiagnose it as a skin infection.

"They're telling you you only have a 40 percent chance of living," says Markham, on leave from her job scheduling store ship-

ments to Fred Meyer's warehouse in Clackamas. "They don't give you much of a life. It's scary."

The treatment, chemotherapy combined with a stem-cell transplant, is costly, generally totaling between \$80,000 and \$150,000. Doctors, patients, insurers and researchers still disagree on whether the treatment actually works and for whom.

But Oregon's two largest health insurers, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon and Kaiser Health Plan of the Northwest, both cover it.

Fred Meyer, however, is a so-called "self-insurer." Fred Meyer has developed its own health benefit plan and pays for employee medical and hospital costs out of

its own pocket.

"They made up their mind from day one that they weren't going to cover Julie," said her sister, Frances "Fran" Biddle of Seattle.

She has used the Internet to orchestrate a national letter-writing campaign protesting Fred Meyer's refusal to pay. "They decided she was terminal," Biddle said.

Fred Meyer officials refuse to comment on Markham's case because of a lawsuit by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claiming violation of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Documents filed with the lawsuit show that Fred Meyer specifically excluded coverage for Markham's specific type of cancer.

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