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COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Yes on Measure 23 gives health care basics to Oregon

Health care is one of the basic, fundamental needs of all human beings. Yet in these times, it is hard, if not impossible, to have adequate health care without paying large amounts of money to a doctor, hospital or pharmacist.

The two options left for those who need medical care are either being rich or being a member of a HMO or insurance company. And most HMOs or insurance companies do not have the best interests of the patient at heart.

This is why we endorse the passage of Measure 23 — the Oregon Comprehensive Health Care Finance Plan. For a progressive income tax rate of no more than 8 percent — so much for the “huge tax increase” that the measure’s opponents threaten — every Oregonian will be assured basic health care, dental care and 24-hour hospital care, should they need it. Our only concern with the bill is that it does not set explicit residency requirements.

But that is a minor quibble. Nearly half a million Oregonians have no health insurance. While the free or low-cost clinics in Eugene and other cities can help with immunizations and minor ailments, the uninsured often can’t get care until they need to go to the emergency room — and even then, they’re stuck with the bill.

Those days have to end. We urge students to vote yes on Measure 23 and bring a health care plan to Oregon that will help all Oregonians.

Corcoran will best represent students

Students can find a friend in the state Senate race by electing Tony Corcoran to represent District 4.

District 4 represents rural areas around Eugene and the University area. Corcoran is an incumbent, he has experience representing diverse populations and he served in the state House for two years before moving to the Senate.

A strong defender of public education, Corcoran is focused on retaining funding for higher education — unlike his opponent, David Alsup, who appears to be more concerned with K-12 funding than funding for all of education in Oregon.

We appreciate that Corcoran has been a proponent of labor rights and social services, representing University classified staff on numerous occasions as a member of the Revenue Committee and the Business, Labor and Economic Development Committee.

And while he agreed that there’s a need to protect its forests and communities from devastating wildfires, Corcoran doesn’t propose clearcut logging as a means to cap the buildup of undergrowth, as does his opponent.

Corcoran has maintained a self-described good relationship with the Oregon Students Association and with the current ASUO Executive, giving students a voice in the state Legislature.

We urge students in the University community to vote for Tony Corcoran — he will best represent District 4.

Editorial policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

America’s sexual healing

Every minute, 23 Americans contract a sexually-transmitted disease. Sixty-three percent of the staggering 15 million Americans who will get an STD this year are under the age of 25.

STDs are a serious problem, and our society is not doing enough to combat it. Sixteen states do not currently provide education about sex or STDs in public schools.

This needs to change. The United States has the highest rate of STDs in the industrialized world. Estimates range anywhere from 50 to 100 times the rate in other developed countries.

This is not because Americans have sex earlier or more frequently. The average age for the first sexual experience and general level of sexual activity is almost identical in America and other industrialized nations such as France, Canada, Germany and England.

However, American teens and young adults are much more likely to have sex with multiple partners and engage in sexual relationships much more freely. There is also a significantly lower use of contraception in the United States.

The partisan divide over all policy issues concerning sex has made both the political left and right overlook the fact that this problem directly affects our entire society. More than 85 percent of the most prevalent communicable diseases in the United States are transmitted sexually. STDs cost \$17 billion in national health care each year.

Another troubling aspect of our sexual health is the nature of the diseases themselves. Two viral STDs, herpes and HIV, are with the afflicted for the rest of their lives. Modern medicine has no cure and very little treatment to offer. New strains of gonorrhea have become resistant to several kinds of antibiotics that were formally used to treat the disease.

Many STDs can go unnoticed for months or even years, living in the body but not causing any symptoms. One of



M. Reilly
 Cosgrove
 Separate this



every three Americans infected with HIV is unaware they have it.

Part of the reason that STDs are overlooked is because they are stereotypically connected to Third World countries, intravenous drug users and homosexuals. Although these stereotypes are not wholly without statistical evidence, the single most common factor among Americans who contract STDs is age. One out of every four sexually active American teens will be infected with a sexually transmitted disease every year, and AIDS is the number one cause of death among people age 25 to 44.

College students are 10 times as likely to contract HIV as the general population. Almost 10 percent of women in college have an STD. One survey reported that 19 percent of all college students currently have an STD, but the survey was conducted on only 6,000 students.

A friend of mine is very fond of summing up his world view by saying, “No

human is anything more than a life support system for a reproductive organ.” Sex is a part of life. Rambunctious coeds fresh out from under the parental thumb are as notorious for sleeping around as they are for getting drunk, experimenting with drugs, and — in Eugene at least — starting riots.

But there is a line between having a good time and taking unacceptable risks. Every person must draw that line for himself or herself. This life support system recently developed a very different perspective on casual sex. I was exposed to an STD last year.

The STD was a serious one. I was exposed by someone who attends the University and who knew she was infected. I didn’t get it, but you might not be so lucky.

Contact the columnist at michaelcosgrove@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Letter to the editor

Trees do not make a forest

This letter is in regards to Scott J. Kane’s commentary on logging practices (“Anti-loggers should re-check facts about forest thinning,” ODE, Oct. 16).

Kane mentioned that lumber and paper companies have been planting millions of acres of trees per year. This fact is often offered up to show that we can cut as many trees as we like, as long as we

are planting more than we cut and keep the right time schedules.

What is overlooked is the fact that the forest being cut down is actually an ecosystem; there are many species of trees, shrubs, mosses, fungi, insects and animals that are necessary for the forest to function. These are almost all lost when an area is clear-cut or heavily logged. What is replanted is not a forest, but a monoculture plantation of the most economically valuable trees. These new plantations cannot support the ecosystem and accompanying species that once lived there.

In fact, it is this lack of species diversity, not “overgrowth,” as Kane said, that can make forests more susceptible to disease and insect infestations. A healthy, in-tact ecosystem is the best weapon against insect infestations and diseases.

Even the most brilliant ecologists of our day do not know how to replace a perfectly functioning ecosystem. For this reason and many others, our first goal must be to preserve our forests.

Rudy Dietz
 junior
 psychology

Online poll

Each Monday, the Emerald publishes the previous week’s poll results and the coming week’s poll question. Visit dailyemerald.com to vote.

Last week: What’s your favorite Oregon ski area?

Results: 113 total votes

Hoodoo — 1 vote, or 0.9 percent

Mt. Bachelor — 41 votes, or 36.3 percent

Mt. Ashland — 7 votes, or 6.2

percent

Willamette Pass — 10 votes, or 8.8 percent

Timberline Lodge — 4 votes, or 3.5 percent

Mt. Hood SkiBowl — 2 votes, or 1.8 percent

Mt. Hood Meadows — 12 votes, or 10.6 percent

Other — 1 vote, or 0.9 percent

Don’t know — 10 votes, or 8.8 percent

Leave me alone! — 25 votes, or 22.1 percent

Well, it looks like Mt. Bachelor was the most popular skiing and snowboarding destination to those who responded.

This week: What are you going to do this Halloween?

Choices:

Dressing in costume

Drinking

Gorging on candy

Anything but studying

Don’t know

Leave me alone!