

Meningitis death possibly linked to Sept. 20 concert

Health officials suggest Mani Shimada and Christina Norton came into contact with the disease at WOW Hall

By Ali Shaughnessy
Senior News Reporter

Lane County Public Health officials have discovered a possible link between the death of 16-year-old Mani Shimada, a student at Wellsprings Friends School, and the illness of 15-year-old Christina Norton.

Norton, a South Eugene International High School student, became seriously ill after contracting what is sus-

pected to be bacterial meningitis, a disease that can be fatal.

Shimada and Norton may have come into contact with the disease at a punk-rock concert at the WOW Hall on Sept. 20 during the Eugene Celebration. Health officials are recommending that people who attended the event contact their doctor immediately.

"The only thing in common (between the two cases) at this point is the concert," Melinda Kletzok, Lane County government spokeswoman, said. She added that people who joined in the mosh pit during the concert may be at a higher risk of infection.

Betsy Meredith, Lane County Pub-

lic Health communicable disease nursing supervisor, said there is no confirmation that the two high school students were ever in direct contact with each other. She was quick to point out that people who did not attend the concert should not be overly concerned about contracting the disease.

Fever and headache are often the first symptoms of bacterial meningitis. The disease may also cause irritability, lethargy, loss of appetite, stiff neck, vomiting and a rash.

"Initially there are flu-like symptoms," University Health Center Director Tom Ryan said. "But the symptoms progress rapidly, usually within

a few hours. A person will get very sick, very fast."

Ryan also stressed that people who were not in direct contact with the two high school students should not panic.

"Typically ... about 10 percent of people carry the bacteria (that causes bacterial meningitis) in their throat," Ryan said. "They aren't sick, and don't treat it. Eventually it clears up."

If the bacteria does turn into bacterial meningitis, there is a 10 percent mortality rate. Only 1.5 individuals per hundred thousand per year; however, actually contract the disease.

Bacterial meningitis is typically spread from person to person by di-

rect contact with nasal or throat secretions. The disease can be spread through the sharing of cigarettes, eating utensils, a drinking glass or a toothbrush. It can also be spread by kissing or by living in the same space as an infected individual.

The disease can be treated with an antibiotic available at the University Health Center for five dollars, and a vaccine is also available for \$79.

For additional information, contact Lane County Public Health at (541) 682-4041.

Contact the senior crime/health/safety reporter at alishaughnessy@dailyemerald.com.

TAX

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street repair projects since the tax went into effect; portions of West 18th Avenue and Amazon Parkway were among those projects.

Jones added that the city staff estimated Eugene needs about \$8 million to \$9 million per year in order to keep up with repair demands. He said city officials were having discussions with leaders from Lane County, Springfield and Cottage Grove to create additional funding sources.

In addition to the new 3-cent gas tax in Eugene, retailers must also

pay a statewide gas tax of 24.1 cents per gallon and a federal gas tax of 18.4 cents per gallon. Congress is currently considering raising the federal gas tax by 6 cents to 24.4 cents per gallon.

Even with the 3-cent increase in price, the Chevron station located on Coburg Road has not seen a drop in business, according to attendant Kevin Kelley.

"This is Coburg (Road) so it's usually pretty busy," Kelley said. "People are coming in all the time."

Kelley said when prices are at their highest, customers will often buy gas in smaller amounts.

"People will only spend \$5 or \$10

if the cost is high," Kelley said.

Though gas prices have begun to drop nationwide and in Oregon, this month Eugene holds the second highest gasoline prices in the state at an average \$1.88 per gallon of regular unleaded, according to the American Automobile Association.

Medford and Ashland have the highest prices in the state at \$1.928 per gallon. The national average is \$1.637 per gallon. At \$1.868, Oregon's average price is the third highest in the nation. Hawaii and California are ranked with the highest and second highest prices, respectively.

Undeclared freshman Valorie

Darling, who owns a car, was surprised when she learned about the gas tax. She expressed that she did not view it as entirely negative news, however. She said if the city did not have money for road repairs, it could drain funds from city programs.

"Taxes are a problem, but they're still important because without them we could end up losing other services," Darling said. "Oregon is going through tough times so I think the tax is necessary."

Contact the senior city/state politics reporter at atshoikeda@dailyemerald.com.

CAMPUS BUZZ

Wednesday

Guided video tour of ocean floor, Knight Library Browsing Room, 7 p.m. Craig Young, University marine biologist and director of the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, will show some of the most "unusual" deep-sea environments. Includes footage from the Gulf of Mexico, the Arabian Sea and the Rockall Trough, located west of Scotland.

Information and tours meeting, Collier Living Room, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.

ASUO Student Senate meeting, EMU Board Room, 7:30 p.m.-11 p.m.

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