

NEON awarded federal grants to address opioid misuse in region

Observer staff

Northeast Oregon Network was recently awarded funding from two programs administered by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration.

In May, NEON was awarded a grant from the Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program in the amount of \$200,000 per year for a three-year period. The funds will support the NEON Pathways Community Hub, with the goal of preventing and reducing opioid misuse and helping

community members access treatment. In September, NEON was awarded an additional grant by the Rural Health Opioid Program for \$250,000 per year for three years. This grant will further strengthen the effort, allowing the organization to add new partners and expand the services that will be available to residents in Union, Wallowa, Baker, Umatilla and Malheur counties.

"The opioid misuse crisis is a big enough problem that everyone needs to play

a part in the solution. It's more than just a health care, or law enforcement, or mental health issue," Eric Griffith, NEON executive director, said in a press release. "Efforts are being made from the federal government and on down to local government and even small nonprofit organizations to address the opioid crisis. Here at NEON, we're doing what we can to contribute to working toward a solution."

Funds will allow NEON to expand support for

the work of Community Health Workers as they assist individuals at risk for opioid misuse. Working with a Community Health Worker can help individuals overcome barriers, such as lack of transportation or difficulty navigating the medical system, that can keep them from effectively managing their health or seeking help they need. NEON currently works with 10 organizations, primarily hospitals and clinics, that employ Community Health Workers.

NEON is a 501(c)3 nonprofit health collaborative. It originally served Union, Wallowa and Baker counties in Northeast Oregon and recently expanded into Umatilla and Malheur counties. NEON launched in 2004 from a small group of individuals who recognized the value of community collaboration in ensuring the health of our residents. For more information contact Eric Griffith, executive director, at 541-910-4986 or egriffith@neonoregon.org.

BRIEFLY

From staff reports

Anna Gambill to perform in Christ Chapel livestream

SAINT PETER, Minn. — Anna Gambill, of La Grande, will perform Dec. 1 during Gustavus Adolphus College's annual Christmas in Christ Chapel on campus in Saint Peter, Minnesota. This year, Christmas in Christ Chapel's theme is Visions of Divine Mystery.

The Dec. 1 evening performance will be livestreamed for free beginning at 7:30 p.m. central time. Visit www.gustavus.edu/cc to learn more or watch the livestream.

The service will also appear on public television stations throughout the country this holiday season. Check your local listings or stream online at TPT.org beginning Dec. 20.

Gustavus Adolphus College is a private liberal arts college. Founded in 1862, it is the oldest Lutheran college in Minnesota.

Fully accredited and known for its strong science, writing, music, athletics, study-away, and service-learning programs, Gustavus is internationally recognized for its annual Nobel Conference.

WISH LIST

Local human service organizations and schools often need donations of specific items or volunteers. The Observer provides the Wish List as a public service. Needs are listed as space allows and must be updated every six months. To submit wishes, call 541-963-3161 or email news@lagrandeobserver.com.

FRIDAY BACKPACK PROGRAM
fridaybackpack@gmail.com
Please e-mail for drop-off information.

Mail tax-deductible checks to:
PO, Box 537, La Grande
15-16 oz. cans: Chef Boyardee, refried beans, chili, peanut butter (plastic only), vegetables
10 oz. cans: tomato and chicken noodle soup
3-5 oz. cans: tuna, chicken, Vienna sausages
fruit rolls, fruit snacks and small boxes of raisins
packets of instant oatmeal and hot chocolate
individual cups of fruit, applesauce, and pudding
small juice boxes with 17 grams of sugar or less
granola bars, protein bars and snack crackers (wrapped in one serving size)
Ramen pouches or cups
boxes of macaroni and cheese, Chicken/Hamburger/Tuna Helper
individual single serving boxes of cereal

UNION COUNTY SENIOR CENTER/COMMUNITY CONNECTION
541-963-7532

Drop off at Community Connection, 1504 N. Albany St., La Grande

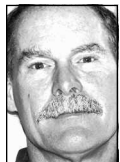
volunteer drivers for Meals on Wheels (especially needed)
monetary donations for Meals on Wheels sustainers
new or used CLEAN and in good shape wheelchairs, bath chairs/benches, walkers, canes, crutches, toilet chairs (any medical equipment that's not too big; cannot be made of wood)
disposable toiletries (razors, toothbrushes, combs, deodorant, etc.)

tarp and wool military-type blankets for shelter
winter hats, gloves and scarves

Antibiotic resistance — don't let the little things get you down

By John Winters

Today, growing numbers of bacteria are unfazed by modern medicine's most powerful drugs.



Winters

These antibiotic-resistant superbugs are a global threat to health. Bacteria are tiny single-celled organisms that have adapted to live almost anywhere on the planet. They thrive on our skin, in our gut, in snow, even in ocean floor thermal vents that are hotter than 600 degrees.

Many thousands of different species of bacteria exist, each with unique capabilities. Thousands of bacteria species are essential to human life — there are more than 1,000 species in our gut alone — while fewer than 100 species threaten it. Friendly bacteria on our skin fend off infection, bacteria in our gut is essential to digestion, and bacteria

in soil is needed for plant growth. Some bacteria cause problems such as tuberculosis, pneumonia and food-borne illnesses.

In the 1930s, miraculous new drugs were developed that killed bacteria. These new drugs treated life-threatening bacterial infections and revolutionized modern medical thinking. Experts proclaimed a new dawn in medicine and predicted the coming arrival of a drug to treat every disease. This thinking persists to some point today — however, understanding of bacteria's importance in the world is more complete now. Commonly used antibiotics such as penicillin, cipro and augmentin are examples of "broad spectrum" antibiotics that kill all bacteria without discretion. These drugs effectively kill disease-causing bacteria and friendly bacteria alike. Oops. This incomplete appreciation

of bacteria's role in health and disease has led to overuse of drugs and its resultant problems.

Since drugs always leave behind a few resistant bacteria, over time we have cultivated drug-proof superbugs.

Bacteria are always adapting to improve their own survival, so they will eventually outsmart a new drug. The problem of antibiotic resistance is worsening. Bacteria are able to share information among themselves and are adapting to "miracle" drugs more quickly.

In the 1950s, resistance appeared several years after a new drug was introduced. In 1996, when levaquin was introduced, resistance appeared in the same year.

The United States has one of the world's highest rates of antibiotic use. Today, only half of antibiotic prescriptions are medically appropri-

ate. This practice is ineffective and expensive and helps create antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Misuse occurs most often when treating ear infections, sinus and throat infections and colds, which are almost always caused by viruses.

Ear infections can be treated quickly and successfully without resorting to antibiotics. Another area of antibiotic overuse is the livestock industry. Antibiotics are routinely used to increase growth and overcome unclean conditions. In 2015, more than 21 million pounds of medically important antibiotics were given to animals.

Solutions exist to this problem. The Center for Disease Control recommends hand washing, vaccines, safe food handling and the development of new antibiotics. The World Health Organization recommends a reduction of antibiotic use on

healthy animals, which the European Union started doing 11 years ago. Natural medicine treats the cause of an illness, be it stress, poor hygiene, a virus or a bacteria.

Safe, effective therapies for treating bacterial infections have existed for thousands of years. Plant medicines, hydrotherapy and certain supplements treat illness and save antibiotic drugs for more severe cases.

Illness is often preventable with good nutrition, physical and social engagement and good hygiene. Otherwise, as Margaret Chan, WHO director general, says: "A post-antibiotic era, in which common infection and minor injuries can kill, far from being an apocalyptic fantasy, is instead a very real possibility in the 21st century and may be the end to modern medicine as we know it."

Lions district governor salutes service of Elgin members



Courtesy Photo

Lions International District Governor Phyllis Carlin recently made an official visit to the Elgin Lions Club. During her visit, she recognized Kate Bottger and Gene Hardy for 10 years of service and Gerald Hopkins for 45 years of service.

BIRTHS

GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

BLY: To Gretchen Michelle Bly and Dakota Wayne Bly, of Elgin, a son, Soren Winfield Bly, 10 pounds 7 ounces, Nov. 9 at 11:32 a.m. Grandparents are Renae and Lewis Bly and Sharon and Winfield Paine.

BOGGS: To Nichole Boggs and Jonathan Boggs, of La Grande, a daughter, Audrey Boggs, 6 pounds 7 ounces, Nov. 5 at 12:16 p.m.

FUHRMAN: To Mariah Dawn Rose-Fuhrman and Lowell David Fuhrman II, of La Grande, a daughter, Rory Lee Fuhrman, 8 pounds 0.4 ounces, Nov. 14 at 2:12 p.m. Grandparents are David and Teri Fuhrman and Sandy Dockery.

GRAY: To Jillian Gray and Kayle Gray, of La Grande, a daughter, Vylas Anna Kay Gray, 6 pounds 12 ounces, Nov. 6 at 6:23 p.m. Grandparents are Robert and Cynthia Chandler, Kevin and Ruth Gray, and Deb

and Stan Rogers.

KEPNER: To Sierra Dawn Smithhart and Joshua John William Kepner, of La Grande, a son, James Robert Quincy Kepner, 7 pounds 1 ounce, Nov. 4 at 2:55 p.m.

LEE: To Bethany Whitis and Michael Lee, of La Grande, a daughter, Natalie Joeline Rose Lee, 5 pounds 11 ounces, Nov. 6 at 10:19 p.m.

PALUH: To Teri Franita Amson-Paluh and Daniel Henry Paluh, of La Grande, a daughter, Brielle Fayelynn Paluh, 7 pounds 4 ounces, Nov. 15 at 11:39 a.m. Grandparents are Angie Amson, Nathan Gaarsland, Scott and Theresa Amson, and Twila and Chan Paluh.

STEBBINS: To Carrie Kristen Stebbins and Tyson Gerald Stebbins, of La Grande, a son, Riggins Hunter Stebbins, Nov. 15 at 3:27 p.m. Grandparents are Teresa and John Stebbins, Teresa Stratton, and Mark and Kimberly Stratton.

Sprenger honored as outstanding volunteer



Contributed photo

La Grande Lions Club President Tim Gleeson honors Betty Sprenger for her outstanding volunteer support of the annual Coats for Kids project. Sprenger collects lost and found coats from La Grande schools at the end of each school year. She washes and mends the coats and donates them to the annual La Grande Lions Coats for Kids program. Sprenger has volunteered her time to this cause for many years. This year, the La Grande Lions distributed about 400 coats to children and adults from all over Union County.

Union celebrates veterans



Courtesy Photo

The Union School District held a Veterans Day assembly Nov. 8, during which the students showed their respect and gratitude for all of those who have served.



Nicole Cathey

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