

# Just news

## AIDS project appoints executive director

The Cascade AIDS Project, Inc. (CAP) announced on September 18 the appointment of Paul Starr, MSW, as Executive Director of the AIDS service organization. Without dissent, the CAP board of directors elected Starr, the former Client Services Coordinator and Interim Executive Director for the Project, following a nationwide search for a new executive director. "Paul Starr has been instrumental in developing programs and services for people with AIDS. We feel he is well-prepared to provide the leadership and guidance our community needs in fighting the AIDS epidemic, said Jim Simons, board chair.



PHOTO BY JAY BROWN

Twenty-four applications were received by the Cascade AIDS Project in response to the nationwide search process. Applicants varied widely in their experience both in non-profit administration as well as AIDS-related projects. The responses were generated from as far away as New York and Colorado as well as the West Coast.

Paul Starr has been an employee of CAP since 1986; he served as Client Services Coordinator until June of this year, when he was appointed Interim Executive Director.

"I look forward to intensifying our efforts as we strive to stem the expanding tide of AIDS in Oregon. I am proud of the work CAP has done already, but there is a still greater need for more prevention, more support services, and more understanding of what the AIDS crisis means to our community," Starr said.

The Cascade AIDS Project is a non-profit, community-based organization committed to improving the quality of life for people affected by AIDS and HIV disease, and their loved ones. CAP offers emotional and practical support services for people directly affected by the disease and performs education and outreach to the general public and targeted communities-at-risk. CAP operates the Brinker Fund to provide emergency financial and food assistance to people living with the disease, and operates the Oregon AIDS Hotline, a statewide information and referral service for AIDS/HIV-related issues.

## CAP to encourage early HIV testing

The Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) has announced a significant revision in its policy of HIV antibody testing in response to a growing body of medical evidence supporting early detection and treatment of HIV disease. At its monthly meeting, the CAP board of directors voted to adopt the new policy which strongly encourages early HIV testing for individuals who feel they may be at risk.

Paul Starr, Executive Director of CAP, said the new policy will have an immediate and meaningful impact on its delivery of programs and services to people with AIDS and to the general public.

Recent medical advances in the treatment of HIV disease, particularly the use of AZT in its early stages, prompted the policy revision. The CAP board acknowledged that it is "now clear that early detection of HIV infection, in conjunction with early medical intervention, may alter the course of HIV disease progression significantly." Cascade AIDS Project will begin immediately to encourage people who feel they may be at risk to take the HIV antibody test.

"This represents a major shift for AIDS service organizations around the country and for the treatment of HIV disease in general," said Starr. "AIDS is becoming less a short-term fatal illness and more of a long-term chronic yet manageable condition. People still die, but it is clear that the earlier we intervene, the better our chances of halting the progression of HIV disease. Early HIV testing is a key component of this strategy," he concluded.

Concerns still exist over safeguards regarding the confidentiality and emotional, social and legal ramifications of early HIV testing. The CAP board of directors strongly believes that HIV testing should be voluntary, anonymous or otherwise confidential, include pre- and post-test counseling, and be conducted with informed consent.

Immediate changes in CAP programs and services will be seen in the information and advice offered through the Oregon AIDS Hotline, a statewide information and referral service sponsored jointly by CAP and the Oregon State Health Division. Hotline volunteers will now encourage early HIV testing for callers who feel they may be at risk.

CAP educational outreach will also be affected. A CAP-sponsored community forum titled "The Next Step: New Facts about HIV Testing" will be held on October 22, at the Portland Building, 1120 SW 5th, 2nd Floor, Room B, from 7 - 9 pm to discuss the issue. CAP educational volunteers will also distribute flyers and brochures to individuals through a street outreach effort in Portland's at-risk communities.

*What have you done lately to stop the spread of HIV disease?*

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