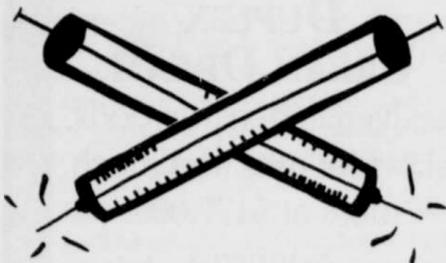


**OUTSIDE IN NABS  
NEEDLE-EXCHANGE GRANT**

Outside In, a Portland-based social service agency that works with many sexual minority and homeless youth, received a \$40,000 grant from the Tides Foundation in support of its needle-exchange program. This is a challenge grant, and Outside In is expected to raise \$40,000 in matching funds.



Outside In's needle-exchange program is currently funded by Multnomah County and the city of Portland. The program exchanges 180,000 syringes annually to help drug injectors protect themselves from HIV and AIDS. It is a harm reduction program, providing not only syringes, but counseling and other assistance.

For more information, call Outside In at 223-4121.

**SQUELCHING YOUTH SUICIDE**

A series of community forums focusing on youth suicide prevention are being held across Oregon throughout March.

The forums are taking place in Salem, Eugene, Seaside, Lincoln City, Bandon, Klamath Falls, Rogue River, Bend, The Dalles, Ontario, Portland and La Grande.

Public input will be compiled and developed into a final statewide plan for youth suicide prevention, says Ron Bloodworth, youth suicide prevention coordinator at the Oregon Health Division.

"Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people in Oregon. It is a public health problem that can be prevented," he says. "These public forums are being conducted to raise awareness of the problem and to engage communities around Oregon in identifying strategies to prevent youth suicide. These forums will assist our statewide efforts to significantly reduce the tragedy of youth suicide in our state."

According to a 1998 health division report, the suicide rate for Oregonians between the ages of 15 and 19 has increased more than fivefold over the last 30 years. Furthermore, one-fifth of Oregon high school students participating in a 1997 youth risk survey reported they had considered suicide, says Bloodworth.

In 1996, Gov. John Kitzhaber appointed a task force to study the problem. Its report included recommendations for improvements in education, mental health resources, law enforcement, communities and government. One recommendation enacted by the 1997 Oregon Legislature was the establishment of a youth suicide prevention coordinator at the Oregon Health Division.

"Oregonians now have the opportunity to move this effort to the next level by taking an active role in finding solutions. Working together, we can find ways to significantly reduce the tragedy of youth suicide in our state," says Bloodworth.

In a recent e-mail, Bloodworth urged members and allies of the sexual minorities community to participate in the forums.

He writes, in part: "It is very important that youth, parents, community activists and others concerned about youth suicide in general—and sexual minority youth suicide in particular—attend and participate in one of these commu-

nity forums. We know that youth suicide is often a result of severe depression and other mental health issues. We also know that social oppression involving rejection, isolation, abuse, etc., can be an underlying factor or triggering event in the suicidal behavior of GLBT youth."

Through his work at the health division, Bloodworth is "aware of a number of youth suicides in Oregon that are GLBT-related."

Bloodworth's call to action continues: "The 22 draft strategies that are being presented at these forums for public response are inclusive of issues and concerns faced by GLBT youth in our schools and communities. It is important that people come to these forums and speak to their concerns regarding GLBT youth, otherwise the impression left is that public concern for GLBT youth suicide is not there."

He adds: "At the first forum in Salem, several PFLAG parents participated. Their presence was very gratifying. However, we needed more youth and more educators. If you live within driving distance of any of these forums, I encourage you to make the effort to be there."

A forum will be held in Portland March 18 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Oregon Health Division, rooms 120 B and C, 800 N.E. Oregon St. For a full listing of forum sites and dates, contact Bloodworth at 731-4978 or via e-mail at Ronald.Bloodworth@state.or.us.



**HIV CONFERENCE  
SLATED FOR MID-MARCH**

A conference aimed at addressing HIV, mental health and chemical dependency issues will be held March 15 in Portland.

It will feature national and local experts in the field and will provide continuing education for psychiatrists, counselors, psychologists, social workers, addiction counselors and case managers.

A series of plenaries will provide an overview of HIV and serious mental illness; HIV and substance abuse; implications for community mental health services; and an update on the treatment of HIV and mental illness.

Breakout sessions will address a variety of topics including case management, dual diagnosis, fostering adherence, leading support groups, cultural aspects of HIV care, ethical issues, forensics and corrections issues, harm reduction, recovery issues for persons living with HIV, as well as interactions of psychotropic and retroviral medications.

"Service providers today must address the multiple issues of HIV, substance abuse and mental illness," says Tom Eversole, HIV/STD/TB program manager for the Oregon Health Division. "We are collaborating at state and local levels and are working with consumers and other community partners."

The conference is a collaboration among the Oregon Health Division, the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Division, the Office of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Programs, and the Office of Consumer Technical Assistance.

For more information or registration materials, call Jim Hopper at the Oregon Health Division at 731-4029.

Compiled by INGA SORENSEN

**Pet of the Week**



This month is Bubba's first birthday. He's a red short-hair dog who needs a loving family. He's playful, friendly and currently enrolled in Dog Training 101.

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