

# northwest

## CAP Announces 2005 Awards

Invigorates policy stakeholders statewide

by Sarah Dougher

Each year, Cascade AIDS Project recognizes community members who have made outstanding contributions to the work of the organization through its Torchbearer and Angel Awards.

Bill Hancock, CAP's public policy advocate, notes that this year's community partners include the Douglas County AIDS Council, Coastal AIDS Network, Eastern



U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., was awarded the Torchbearer Award for his advocacy for AIDS issues in Washington, D.C.

Oregon Center for Independent Living and Valley AIDS Information Network. These organizations—along with the HIV Alliance in Eugene, which received an Angel Award in 2004—are part of a new policy coalition of AIDS services in Oregon spearheaded by CAP.

"The purpose of the coalition is to have a cohesive voice regarding policy and legislation on a statewide level," Hancock notes. On the national front, CAP partners with Seattle's Lifelong AIDS Alliance, which coordinates the Northwest states and Alaska in developing policy and advocacy strategy in Washington, D.C.

In February, CAP will host a policy summit in Eugene to gather AIDS service providers from around the state and discuss what they are doing, how they are funded and how CAP might support improvements in services. Another purpose of the summit is to establish a "sound, doable legislative agenda," says Hancock. "We want to get statewide input on the legislative agenda for 2007 to ratchet up our voice in Salem."


The Torchbearer Award, recognizing his advocacy in Washington, D.C., was given to U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore.

Along with a bipartisan group of his colleagues, Smith reintroduced the Early Treatment for HIV/AIDS Act this session. The bill would allow states to provide Medicaid coverage to people diagnosed with HIV so they get the treatments they need to prevent progres-

sion to AIDS. States that choose to offer coverage under the legislation would receive an enhanced federal Medicaid match.

Smith also continues to work to secure new funding for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). He recently offered an amendment to the fiscal year 2006 appropriations act for the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services that would have provided funding to cover the costs associated with ADAP case-load growth. He appreciates the diligent work of Oregon's ADAP, CAREAssist, to keep service levels constant in light of funding challenges.

As part of the federal budget reconciliation process this year, Smith led the fight among Finance Committee members to ensure that the \$10 billion in savings the committee was directed to achieve in Congress' 2006 budget resolution would not harm Medicaid beneficiaries. He adamantly opposed proposals such as co-payments for prescription drugs and other health care services that would have reduced access for some of the program's most vulnerable beneficiaries.

Smith is a co-sponsor of Senate Bill 550, the Microbicide Development Act, which is supported by a bipartisan group of senators. The legislation would expand federal planning and research efforts to fully explore the potential microbicides in controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS. 

### 2005 Public Policy Coalition Members

- **Douglas County AIDS Council:** Serves Douglas and Coos counties. Services include needle exchange, case management, women/teen outreach, support groups, community education, information and referral. Is United Way-supported. For more information contact executive director Billy Russo at billy@hivroseburg.org, call 541-440-2761 or 877-440-2761 or write to 832 N.W. Highland St., Roseburg, OR 97470.

- **Coastal AIDS Network:** Serves Lincoln and Tillamook counties. Services include needle exchange, community education, information and referral. For more information contact executive director Dan Beck at canoffice@earthlink.net, call 541-994-5597 or 866-432-2636 or write to 3128 N.W. Highway 101 #202, Lincoln City, OR 97367.

- **Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living:** Serves Malheur, Harney, Grant, Wallowa, Umatilla, Morrow, Baker, Wheeler, Gilliam and Union counties. Is a disability/advocacy organization contracted by the state for HIV case management. Is also United Way-supported. For more information contact CEO Kirt Toombs at ktoombs@eocil.org or program coordinator Sherri Alston at sherrialston@eocil.org, call 541-889-3119 or 866-248-8369 or write to 1021 S.W. Fifth Ave., Ontario, OR 97914.

- **Valley AIDS Information Network:** Serves Benton and Linn counties. Staff is all-volunteer. Services include a 24-hour hot line, information packets, community education, information and referral. For more information contact board member Bob Skinner at rfsinorg2002@yahoo.com, call 800-588-2437 or write to P.O. Box 971, Corvallis, OR 97339.

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