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Breast Cancer Separates Couple

In September, Glenna Shepherd and her spouse, the Rev. Kermie Wohlenhaus, learned that their lives were about to change. Shepherd, who had served as senior pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of Portland for 3 1/2 years, was affirmed by election to serve as a regional elder in Europe. Change, like tragedy, often comes in threes: In December the couple faced severe storm damage to their Portland home, and earlier this month—amid the repair—Wohlenhaus discovered that she has breast cancer.

Wohlenhaus said she found the lump during a monthly breast exam, which she recommends to all women for early detection. "I'm a healthy girl with healthy breast cancer," she said about the cancer's rapid growth. Having already undergone a lumpectomy, Wohlenhaus will decide based on further tests whether treatment will include radiation or a mastectomy and chemotherapy. According to Wohlenhaus, Shepherd already has a flat in Brighton, England, and has begun her work for the church, which keeps her traveling throughout Western Europe and Africa. "I want her to continue working and hold my future," said Wohlenhaus. She will remain in Portland for her treatment and will join Shepherd in England afterward.

In good spirits, Wohlenhaus said the storm damage to their house was almost a blessing because it gave her something besides the breast cancer on which to focus. Staying in Portland to receive treatment means Wohlenhaus will need to find a place to live, as their reconstructed house is on the market. Because of this unforeseen cost and the fact that health care does not pay for all of the medical care she requires, Wohlenhaus has requested that any possible donations be sent to her at P.O. Box 12426, Portland, OR 97212.

Drug-Resistant HIV Detected in Seattle

Four Seattle men have tested positive for the same strain of multidrug-resistant HIV.

In January, researchers identified the link between all four cases. "It's likely these infections are related to one another, but we still don't know how easily the virus is transmitted or how rapidly the condition might progress to AIDS," said Bob Wood, HIV/AIDS program director for at the Seattle & King County Health Department.

The department said no evidence indicates the drug-resistant strain of HIV has spread outside King County. But officials suggest because the four cases were found over a period of a year, the transmission of the multidrug-resistant strain is ongoing.

Multidrug-resistant HIV, or MDR-HIV, are strains of HIV that are resistant to more than two drugs in the same class. Because HIV is usually treated with many different drugs, over time it is possible for HIV to mutate and become resistant.

In the current four cases, all four of the men had a history of methamphetamine use and multiple, anonymous partners. The Public Health Department is working with the four men and their physicians to contact and test their partners. "We are still working to learn more about these individuals and



The Rev. Kermie Wohlenhaus (right) will battle breast cancer while her partner, the Rev. Glenna Shepherd, serves Metropolitan Community Churches in 68 countries.

the virus they have contracted," said Dorothy Teeter, interim director and health officer for the health department. The partners that have been found were not infected with HIV or their HIV was not related to the current strain.

The Seattle & King County Public Health Department is one of the nation's first places to monitor drug-resistant HIV and AIDS. Since 2000, it has identified 12 other cases of drug-resistant HIV, but none was as resistant as the cases in the four men.

MDR-HIV is difficult to treat because drug options are minimal and more expensive. Normal HIV treatment is approximately \$15,000 a year, but MDR-HIV can cost twice as much.

YWCA Reaches Out to Sexual and Gender Minorities

The counseling center at YWCA Greater Portland offers a variety of support to the queer community.

When center director Adrienne Wolmark started at the YWCA six years ago, she brought with her a serious interest in working with people from the sexual and gender minorities community. "With the demise of Phoenix Rising, there were some gaps in services, especially for people with little resources," she said.

For a sliding-scale fee beginning at \$13, people can attend a 10-week support group for self-identified sexual minority women, a gay men's support group and a transgender support group. "This ongoing group is for individuals who identify as transgender in any way—it's a mixed group with people of all ages," Wolmark said. "I didn't think it would fly because everyone has different struggles, but it has been really successful."

Kit Murray, a queer-identified facilitator of the Thursday evening sexual minority women's support group, said it is helpful to know that the other people in the room are already accepting of each other's identification. According to Wolmark, the group decides its own agenda and often discusses relationships, coming out and homophobia. The counseling center also offers individual and couples counseling. Wolmark said the knowledgeable staff is queer- and trans-friendly.

The counseling center has earned a reputation for its queer-friendliness among training interns as well. "We have people who come specifically to train with us from all the graduate programs in the area

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