

Natural Path to Health-Happy Autumn

By Dr. Carol McIntyre

Hello all. I hope you are enjoying the Autumn season so far. The rains we've had can sometimes make it difficult... but we need the rain to compensate for such a dry summer and supply our gardens with moisture and nutrition. Remember to harvest appropriately so you can make the most of your crops and reap the rewards of your hard work from the summer. At NPBS we are gearing up for the preparation of our working garden.

As soon as the weather permits we will be tilling the soil for the new garden spot. I have decided to start with a smaller section and expand from there after seeing the rate of patient participation. Thank you to Scott Laird for donating recycled newspapers as compost/covering for the garden space. Other donations are still needed and graciously accepted. It is very exciting to get this project underway.

Many of you know that I have a new office manager. Michelle Burch is the acting office manager and I am very excited to have her as part of my team. She has a background as a medical assistant and some of you may know her from her work with Dr. Gardner in North Plains and/or her presence at Sentry market. Her experience and good work ethic is something that will serve the office well and she is already excelling in her tasks at the office. I am pleased

with the transition and look forward to a long lasting relationship with her at the office. Dori has returned to Hawaii and is doing well. She sends her blessings to all of you here and is grateful to have had the opportunity to serve you all while working for me during her recent stay in Oregon.

There are many changes taking place in the world of health care as you are well aware. The major piece is that Cover Oregon is underway. Many insurance companies are making changes because of the government changes. Blue Cross will require pre-authorization for certain services. Any questions regarding these changes can be addressed by our office. Patients are not required to acquire pre-authorization on their own; this will be done directly through the office.

One insurance opportunity I am very excited about for our community is offered through a new insurance company called Oregon Health Co-op. This particular insurance company will offer coverage for Oregonians starting January 1st 2014. They are the first insurance company to recognize Naturopathic doctors as primary care physicians from a financial perspective. People with this particular insurance coverage will be allowed to choose a Naturopathic doctor as their PCP without any restrictions.

Currently, ND's are recognized by numerous states as PCP's... however,

the insurance companies create restrictions on the services they will pay for. Oregon Health Co-op will not place any restrictions on ND services. What this means for you is that there will be no restriction on the number of visits, services, labs etc... that you can receive from your ND. This is the first insurance company in the US that is offering this type of reimbursement and recognition.

The director of the company took the time to survey the public and after doing so studied the statistics. What he saw was that 75% of the people surveyed requested that they be allowed to choose an ND as their primary care and have insurance pay accordingly. Although he was unfamiliar with the qualifications of NDs, he took the time to do his research and decided that because of the professional qualifications NDs hold from their in depth medical training, he would honor this request. You may visit their website at www.ohcoop.com and enter your information to receive a free quote of cost.

What we have discovered is that their insurance is very affordable. For a family of 4, you can receive coverage for approximately \$750/month, which equates out to be less than \$200 per person! For some of you who are paying more than \$600/month for one individual that could bring significant savings.

For those of you who have questions regarding the new health care system being put in place, there will be

a navigator at the Vernonia Community Clinic starting Nov. 1, 2013. This person will assist anyone in the process of understanding how you can serve yourself best within the new system. I urge you to take advantage of this service and consider Oregon Health Co-op as one of your many insurance options. Our community is medically under served and this particular insurance agency will allow me to provide services to you more readily. This company is truly working toward allowing the public to act preventatively and move toward optimal health.

On a last note... many of you know our "office cat" Blue. She had a litter of kittens about 10 weeks ago; two of the four were living in my shed. They went missing last Sunday night (Sept, 22). Mama cat has been very distraught and I am in hopes that someone has some information in regards to the kittens. One was grey with white paws and the other was orange. They would be about 10 weeks old at this time (9 weeks when they went missing). I believe someone took them because of how the mother has reacted and the fact that there was no disturbance to their bedding in the shed. Please contact the office if you have any information at 503.429.3928. We greatly appreciate it.

Happy Autumn! Embrace the season and prepare for winter. Thank you for joining me. Be well~

Health Board and Pacific University Partnership *continued from front page*

summer of 2014. Lewis says she has been working closely with Pacific University and is currently acting as a proctor for graduate students as they complete their Master's Degree thesis. Lewis and the students are completing a Capstone Project through the Masters of Health Administration Program which is working to bring back those additional services (Psychology and Physical Therapy) under a teaching umbrella so they can be fiscally viable. "These services are greatly needed in the community," says Lewis.

According to Lewis the students are completing research through hands on work in rural health clinics as well interviews with health care providers in rural settings. The goal of the project is to evaluate several aspects of rural health care: problems that have been identified in rural health care situations, solutions that have been tried, and successes that have been achieved. "From the data and information they collect the students will develop a set of best practices so we can develop our model based on other people's experience of what has worked best," says Lewis. "The Masters of Health Administration are learning about developing a business model for a successful rural clinic and

we're benefitting from all their work."

Lewis says that there are many advantages to the new partnership with Pacific University. She noted that the Health Board has identified several grants that would provide funding for operations of the Vernonia Health Center. Pacific University has agreed to jointly write the grants together which would specifically fund teaching and staff positions and development of teaching curriculum. "This shows that Pacific is really invested in this being a successful project," says Lewis.

One other specific issue that will be addressed by the partnership is provider shortages. "Pacific University is really choosing to step into the vacuum that is becoming increasingly apparent as we are on the verge of health care reform," says Lewis.

Lewis went on to explain that there is a shortage of providers not only in the metropolitan areas, but especially in rural areas. Lewis says that Pacific University has developed a brand new Rural Health Care tract which addresses specific issues related to practicing medicine in rural settings. "We will be the first rural clinic where they will have a concerted effort to really develop a partnership model. They will be able to

have their students rotate through here and really have the experience of working in a rural clinic and maybe even be enticed to practice in rural clinics after graduation."

Lewis says the provider shortage is widespread and will continue to grow as more people seek health care following the initiation of health care reform. "We will find ourselves in a situation where appointment times go out further and further," says Lewis. "Not only is it important to have and maintain local access to care, but to continue to train providers for the future."

Vernonia's Voice is published on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Our next issue will be November 7th.

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Hello Friends & Neighbors,

I am writing to let you know that I am now located at a new address. Vernonia Realty 953 Bridge St. in Vernonia. I am a Real Estate Broker and I really like this office, as we have a group of friendly experienced professionals who work together as a team to meet the needs of both buyers and seller.

Vernonia Realty has been in business for over 50 years. I have had my license for 10 years and I am prepared to professionally help you meet all your real estate needs.

Come and see me, I would be delighted to answer any of your questions regarding real estate. You may contact me at Vernonia Realty's office or call 503-429-6203. I am looking forward to meeting with you.

Robin Murphy
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