



OCCUPY MEDICAL IS RETIRING ITS BUS AND TENTS

# OCCUPY HEADS TO SPRINGFIELD

*Eugene's free weekly medical service moves across the river*

For the past seven years, Occupy Medical has provided health care to anyone who needs it. The group spent years at the downtown Park Blocks, then moved for one year to a building on Ferry Street before bringing its buses and tents to Washington-Jefferson Park.

Now they are packing up the tents for good as they move to a permanent new medical building in Springfield on Centennial Boulevard near Mohawk Boulevard, not far from Walmart and WinCo.

Occupy Medical began in 2011 as a first-aid tent during the Occupy movement, says Sue Sierralupe, its clinic manager. The chance to get doctor examinations and affordable prescription medication drew in hundreds of people who didn't have health care. In 2012, the group began a weekly clinic in the parks.

"We are the only free clinic in our area," Sierralupe says.

Before deciding to move to a permanent medical clinic, Occupy Medical rented a building on Ferry Street from 2016 to 2017, which gave the volunteers an idea of what a sheltered location could offer.

"It was a wonderful taste of what we could do as an organization," Sierralupe says.

Occupy Medical spent a long time looking for the right place to move. Sierralupe wasn't surprised to learn the best option was in Springfield, partly because it offers cheaper rent.

"I am thankful for people in Springfield making rent manageable," she says.

There is always a transition team in place for one month when Occupy Medical moves, Sierralupe says. She is hoping to get the word out about the new location on social media and by handing out flyers, so people are aware of the move; however, people have already been showing up.

"When we were bringing boxes in the building, five patients showed up and we had to drop everything to help them," she says.

In the building, Occupy Medical has leased two suites. Sierralupe says one is a medical office that has two exam rooms, a triage room and an herbalist. The other suite is the "hospitality" area, where patients can get food and basic hygiene supplies.

"In a building we are better able to provide complicated care," Sierralupe says. "When you have a shelter you are able to do more." She also says this building can provide a safe environment away from the elements for the unhoused.

Moving to a sheltered medical building, Sierralupe says, also has drawbacks.

"We have had a lot of people who felt abandoned by us when we moved from Eugene," she says. Occupy Medical has a wide scope of people it serves, and Sierralupe knows people from Thurston who ride the bus for an hour just to get to the Eugene clinic.

"I acknowledge that people prefer to have us closer, but we are still very close. We would have loved to have a place close to downtown Eugene and Springfield, but there weren't any options," she says.

Sierralupe says she knows any choice they make has both pleasant and unpleasant side effects, and that there will be concerns and problems.

"We work together, we fix it, we do the best we can," she says. "We are so grateful for the support we have gotten." ■

*Occupy Medical's new location is 1717 Centennial Boulevard, Suites 4 and 7, in Springfield. Their Sunday clinic will be open weekly from noon to 4 pm, with signups ending at 3 pm. LTD buses 13 and 17 run near the clinic.*

## POLLUTION UPDATE

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sent Corvallis-based **Truax Corporation** a pre-enforcement notice July 13 for failing to submit its 2018 first quarter report under Oregon's Clean Fuels Program. Truax is registered with DEQ as a large importer of fuels under the program, which "requires importers of transportation fuels in Oregon to reduce the carbon intensity of such fuels by 10 percent" by 2025. While Truax did submit the report a week after receiving DEQ's notice, DEQ referred the matter for formal enforcement, possibly due to the fact that this was Truax's second violation since registering with the program in December of 2016. DEQ's notice indicated that violators may have an unfair advantage over importers that are in compliance, and that violations "will impede the state's progress toward reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and a cleaner transportation system."

— Indigo Sherck/Oregon Clean Water Action Project

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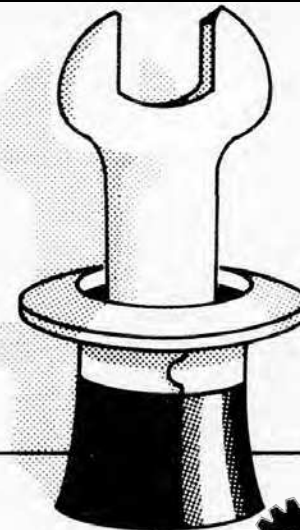
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