

State says determining Medicaid eligibility complicated

Process hampered by old tracking systems

By **CLAIRE WILLYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — More than three years after Oregon opted to expand healthcare coverage under Medicaid, the government's healthcare plan, it's still not clear how much the state may have spent on people who don't qualify.

In response to an audit memo released by the Secretary of State's Office this week, the Oregon Health Authority said that the process for determining eligibility for the program has been hampered by old, disparate systems for keeping track of Medicaid recipients and the failure of Cover Oregon, the state's

expensive attempt at a health insurance marketplace.

Oregon decided to expand Medicaid in 2013 under the federal Affordable Care Act, and dramatically widened the pool of Oregonians who could receive government health coverage.

State auditors' preliminary findings, first reported by The Oregonian on Tuesday evening, brought more visibility to what has been another wrinkle in a litany of problems with the state's implementation of the Medicaid expansion, including the Cover Oregon failure, which cost state and federal taxpayers about \$300 million.

Still in question

Secretary of State Dennis Richardson's memo said that at a cost of \$430 per patient per month, the state could have spent millions of dollars providing coverage for approximately 86,000 people whose qualifications for the

program are still in question.

The health authority and several Democratic legislators on healthcare committees maintained this week that the Legislature, Gov. Kate Brown and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services were already aware of problems with enrollment and eligibility, which are in the process of being resolved.

As of May 1, there were more than 1 million Oregonians on the Oregon Health Plan, representing about a quarter of the state's population.

Most people receiving Medicaid coverage in the state — nearly 734,000 recipients — have been determined eligible and have been enrolled in a new eligibility system called ONE. Another 180,000 people are receiving benefits through programs for foster children, the elderly and people with disabilities administered by the Oregon Department of Human Services.

That leaves about 115,000 people who were previously determined eligible for Medicaid benefits, but whose current qualifications for the program have not been confirmed.

Of that 115,000:

- 14,000 are in the process of having their benefits terminated because they haven't responded to the health authority's inquiry.

- 17,000 have responded and are undergoing analysis to determine whether they are eligible for Medicaid, a process the health authority expects to complete today.

- 84,000 people are still being analyzed to find out what the agency needs to do next about them, as they have previously been eligible for Medicaid benefits, but have not been "redetermined" eligible.

"Just because redetermination is not complete, does not indicate that they are ineligible for Medicaid," an agency

spokeswoman said in an email.

Eligibility is an official term that denotes whether or not someone has met the government's criteria for health coverage. Eligibility determination is a formal process that is supposed to take place annually; the state got several passes on performing those annual determinations from the federal government until mid-2016.

According to the Oregon Health Authority, federal law says that once someone has been determined eligible for Medicaid coverage, eligibility cannot be revoked until the case has been reviewed, and he or she has been notified and given a chance to respond.

Someone would no longer meet the criteria if he or she started earning more than the maximum income, for example, but official eligibility isn't up until the formal determination and revocation processes are complete.

'Poor data quality'

According to the health authority, "poor data quality" in Cover Oregon and the state's older data systems meant that the agency had to contact each person receiving benefits to complete a paper application.

It took more than two years to finish that process on fairly straightforward cases. What's left, the agency said, are cases "more complex in nature." The health authority says it will know what to do next with the group of about 84,000 people by the end of the month.

"At that time we will be able to clearly understand the number of Oregonians that still need to go through the redetermination process to ensure they remain eligible for Medicaid benefits," the health authority said in a statement.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

ON THE RECORD

Menacing

• At 3:33 p.m. Thursday, Paul Fenimore, 48, of Warrenton, was arrested by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office on Sunset Beach Lane in Warrenton for menacing and disorderly conduct.

DUII

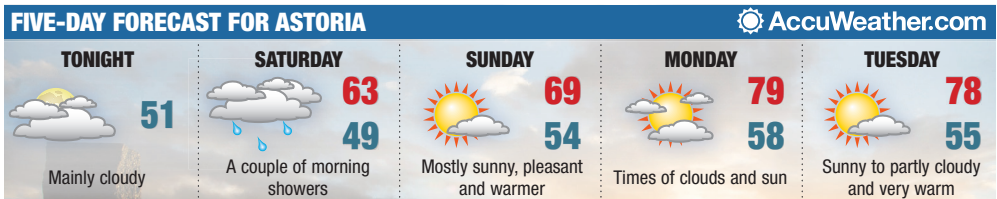
• At 5:37 p.m. Thursday, Shanon Bella Sabey, 35, of

Seaside, was arrested by the Warrenton Police Department on the 600 block of U.S. Highway 101 for driving under the influence of intoxicants and recklessly endangering another person. She allegedly was seen slumped over a wheel and driving the wrong way in the Fred Meyer parking lot. Two children were also in the car, and

her blood alcohol content was 0.34 percent.

Assault

• A 10:45 p.m. Thursday, Jonathan Lawrence Preuss, 32, of Warrenton, was arrested by the Warrenton Police Department on the 1300 block of Southwest Ridge Road for fourth-degree assault. His girlfriend's wrist was allegedly injured.



ALMANAC
Astoria through Thursday.
Temperatures: High/low 62°/43°, Normal high/low 61°/46°, Record high 79° in 1997, Record low 36° in 2003.
Precipitation: Thursday 0.00", Month to date 5.76", Normal month to date 2.04", Year to date 47.00", Normal year to date 32.08".

SUN AND MOON
Sunset tonight 8:46 p.m., Sunrise Saturday 5:37 a.m., Moonrise today 2:33 a.m., Moonset today 1:29 p.m.

UNDER THE SKY
Tonight's Sky: Vega will climb into view in the northeast with Arcturus in the east-southeast.

TOMORROW'S TIDES
Astoria / Port Docks
Time High Low
9:02 a.m. 6.8 ft. 3:24 a.m. 2.5 ft.
10:07 p.m. 7.8 ft. 3:31 p.m. 1.0 ft.

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Sat.	Lo	W
Atlanta	89	69	t	88	69	pc		
Boston	86	53	pc	63	50	s		
Chicago	53	50	sh	74	53	t		
Denver	41	31	sn	59	37	pc		
Des Moines	53	48	r	66	45	t		
Detroit	62	49	pc	68	60	pc		
El Paso	82	55	s	84	61	s		
Fairbanks	62	41	pc	62	39	pc		
Honolulu	84	72	pc	85	72	sh		
Indianapolis	77	65	t	81	63	t		
Kansas City	74	56	t	83	45	t		
Las Vegas	82	64	s	89	69	s		
Los Angeles	83	61	s	87	62	s		
Memphis	87	72	t	85	67	t		
Miami	90	80	sh	89	79	pc		
Nashville	89	71	t	89	68	t		
New Orleans	87	74	pc	83	72	t		
New York	90	56	pc	70	52	s		
Oklahoma City	75	52	t	70	48	pc		
Philadelphia	92	59	pc	72	54	pc		
St. Louis	80	69	t	80	57	t		
Salt Lake City	62	46	pc	70	52	s		
San Francisco	76	52	s	76	52	s		
Seattle	70	54	s	69	52	pc		
Washington, DC	91	64	t	72	59	pc		

TOMORROW'S NATIONAL WEATHER
Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

OBITUARIES

Agnar Allen 'Al' Straumfjord, M.D.

Sisters

Dec. 1, 1928 — May 7, 2017



Agnar Allen Straumfjord, M.D., died peacefully in his sleep May 7, 2017, at his home in Sisters, Oregon.

"Al" was born Dec. 1, 1928, to Jon Vid-alin Straumfjord, M.D., and Thorey Thorderson Straumfjord, and was raised in Astoria, Oregon, the middle child of three brothers.

A graduate of Astoria High School, he attended Willamette University and the University of Oregon Medical School, now OHSU, earning his medical degree and completing residencies there in internal medicine and psychiatry. He served in the U.S. Navy as a flight surgeon, and readily admitted he only spent one day at sea.

He had special interest in providing student health care, both at Oregon State University and at OHSU, where he was a professor in the Department of Psychiatry. Later he practiced psychiatry in Corvallis, Oregon, for many years, followed by work at Oregon State Hospital and the Benton County Mental Health Clinic.

Al had Agnar Allen Jr. and Karen Lee with his first wife, Louise Ulvin. In 1973, he and

Marianne Sawin Sanders married, and he added his son, Peter, to his family. In 1975, they moved to a large farm in Albany, Oregon, followed by many years in Camp Sherman and Sisters, Oregon. He loved the farm but eventually retired to his beloved central Oregon.

"Doctor Al" was known for his vast range of knowledge in a multitude of areas, his special love for his Icelandic heritage, and anything to do with railroads. His support of his children and wife was never-ending.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his son, Agnar Allen Jr.; and his brother, Robert. He is survived by his wife, Marianne; his children, Karen (John) Timmers and Peter Straumfjord; his brother, Jon Straumfjord, M.D.; his grandchildren, Kristjana, Jens, Steen, Johann and Kaisa; a great grandchild, Ezra; and many special nieces and nephews.

An open house to celebrate his life will be held June 3, 2017, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the family home. Donations in his honor may be made to the Marianne and Al Straumfjord Family Scholarship Trust at Oregon Health Sciences University.



Agnar "Al" Straumfjord, M.D.

June Elizabeth Sellers

Astoria

Feb. 6, 1932 — May 14, 2017

June Elizabeth Sellers, age 85, passed away peacefully at home on May 14, 2017, in Astoria, Oregon.

She was born on Feb. 6, 1932, in Afton, Tennessee, to Joseph F. and Nancy Grace Childress, the youngest of seven children. She was raised in West Virginia until the age of 12, and then her family moved west to Oregon. She graduated from high school in Vernonia, Oregon, and then trained as a nurse at Good Samaritan in Portland, Oregon.

She married Bobby Elton Sellers on Aug. 5, 1950. June devoted her life to taking care of people, whether it was her family, or as a caregiver to the elderly and ill. She attended Grace Community Bible Church in Astoria.

June will be remembered for her quiet strength and selfless love for her family. Her generous, sweet and kind nature made everyone feel special. She could make you laugh with her quick wit and sense of humor. She loved cooking and telling stories, so you never left her home without a full stomach and a full heart.

She is survived by her three children, a daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Barry Craft of Long Beach, a son, John Sellers of Warrenton, Oregon, and a son and daughter-

in-law, Joseph and Teresita Sellers of Knappa, Oregon; five grandchildren, Eric and his wife Stefanie, Amy, Sarah, Hillary and Shawn; and six great-grandchildren, Tristan, Lucas, Aiden, Elise, Kaelyse and Shamus. She is also survived by an uncle, Harry Childress of West Virginia and children; a sister-in-law, Clarice Sellers of Orlando, Florida; and numerous nieces and nephews whom she loved dearly. She was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years, Bobby.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 27, 2017, at Grace Community Baptist Church, 1195 Irving Ave., in Astoria, Oregon. A reception will follow.

Her interment will be with her husband at Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon.

The family would like to extend their gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Croos and family for providing attentive care and comfort over the past few years. Remembrances may be made to Lower Columbia Hospice in Astoria.

Hughes-Ransom Mortuary in Astoria, Oregon, is handling the funeral arrangements. Visit www.hughes-ransom.com to leave a message and/or sign the online guest book.



June Sellers

CORRECTION

Location incorrect — The location of the final Get Lit at the Beach event — a moderated Q&A with several authors Sunday — was incorrectly reported in the Coast Weekend calendar Thursday. It will take place at the Coaster Theatre, 108 N. Hemlock St., in Cannon Beach.

MEMORIAL

Sunday, May 21
SODERBERG, Leanne — Memorial at 1 p.m., Pine Grove Community House, 225 Laneda Ave. in Manzanita.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

LOTTERIES

OREGON
Thursday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 3-7-6-0
4 p.m.: 1-3-4-1
7 p.m.: 7-0-2-5
10 p.m.: 3-1-7-8

WASHINGTON
Thursday's Daily Game:
7-8-4
Thursday's Keno: 22-24-26-30-31-33-35-40-41-43-44-45-62-63-65-69-70-72-74-77
Thursday's Match 4: 03-09-10-19

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