

Oregon had no plan for checking Medicaid eligibility

One of many shortcomings in Cover Oregon

By **CLAIRE WITCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — When Oregon expanded access to Medicaid in 2014, it had no system in place to perform the annual checks on recipient eligibility required by federal law.

That was one of the many flaws of Cover Oregon, a state health care exchange also intended to handle patient registration for Medicaid. Medicaid is the federal government's health care coverage for the poor and disabled. In Oregon, about a quarter of the state's population — approximately 1 million people — receives it.

More than three years after the expansion was launched under the Affordable Care Act, the state is scrambling to finish verifying whether every Oregonian on Medicaid — the Oregon Health Plan — meets the criteria.

Oregon's new system for managing its Medicaid enrollees, called ONE, has this capability, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

But since ONE was launched in late 2015, patients are still being entered into the system, due in part to disparate datasets and a laborious initial process that requires enrollees to complete a paper application more than 30 pages long.

And the 465 state workers assigned to the task of re-enrollment are not yet finished.

As a result of the problems with Cover Oregon, the state received a series of waivers from the federal government on performing the checks until mid-2016. The health authority maintains the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are aware of and have approved the agency's ongoing efforts to resolve the backlog, despite the current lack of a formal waiver.

Deadline

The governor has given the health authority an Aug. 31 deadline to get about 101,000 Oregonians double-checked. Another 14,000 people are in

the process of being removed from the Oregon Health Plan because they did not respond to the state's termination warnings.

Although the health authority emphasizes the process is now about 90 percent complete, the remaining 10 percent has come to the attention of the state's top auditor, who released a memo arguing that the state could have spent millions of dollars on people who do not qualify for the program.

Secretary of State Dennis Richardson's memo riled up legislators on both sides of the aisle, who are busy hammering out health care budgets and a potential tax on providers to cover some of the costs of expanding Medicaid.

The possibility that the state could have lost money by paying for unqualified recipients — and to clean up the data — in its effort to provide coverage to more people has been highlighted as legislators attempt to close a \$1.4 billion budget gap.

Richardson's office released an audit Wednesday finding the new ONE system functions well when it comes to verifying people for Medicaid. However,

auditors also found that manual entry poses a risk to the accuracy of eligibility determinations and payments to healthcare providers.

Simpler

The health authority says the enrollment and re-determination process will be simpler as time goes on because the system can do certain things automatically, such as verifying an applicant's income by comparing the application to existing datasets.

Asked whether the health authority was equipped to re-determine the eligibility of the approximately 1 million people on the Oregon Health Plan, the agency responded Wednesday that it has "taken aggressive action" to verify recipients' eligibility since the Cover Oregon failure.

The agency hired 300 temporary employees, according to a spokeswoman. It has brought on multiple private contractors to help with the process, Oregon Health Authority Director Lynne Saxton told legislators Tuesday.

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

Ocean Park woman imprisoned for giving drug to child

By **NATALIE ST. JOHN**
EO Media Group

SOUTH BEND, Wash. — Marijuana may be legal for adults now, but giving the drug to a child will still land you in prison, as one Ocean Park, Washington, woman has learned.

In a Pacific County Superior Court hearing earlier this month, Christina Lee Yanez, 36, was sentenced to 13 months in state prison for criminal mistreatment and delivery of marijuana.

Yanez was arrested in April after an ambulance crew responded to a report of an intoxicated 9-year-old at the Dunes Bible Camp swimming pool. The child was taken to the emergency room. Deputies learned that Yanez intentionally gave the child a brownie laced with "dabs," a highly concentrated form of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. According to Pacific County Prosecutor Mark McClain, the child asked for one of the brownies Yanez's boyfriend had made. The boyfriend objected, saying they were drugged and the child should not eat them.

"Ms. Yanez decided to give them to her child anyway," McClain said. "It is inexcusable to give a 9-year-old marijuana, regardless of how relaxed we

have become about its use."

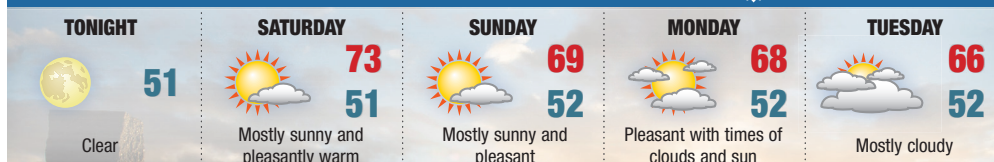
After eating the brownie, the child went to the pool. Allowing the child to swim while intoxicated added to the already significant risk, McClain said.

According to court records, Yanez used "dabs" and other forms of marijuana on a daily basis. She will be required to undergo drug treatment while she is in prison. Child Protective Services will decide whether Yanez is allowed future contact with her child.

Parents who use marijuana need to be especially vigilant about pot products that appeal to children, including candies, cookies and brownies, McClain said.

According to a 2016 report from the Washington Poison Control Center, toxic exposures to marijuana rose in 2014 and 2015, following the start of legal marijuana sales in mid-2014. In 2015, the center documented 272 marijuana-related poisonings, most of which occurred in the victims' homes. About a third of the cases involved edible pot products. Forty-six percent involved people under the age of 18. The number of THC poisoning-related calls increased for almost all age groups in 2015, but the jump was highest among children 1 to 4 years old.

FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA



ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday.

Temperatures
High/low 62°/43°
Normal high/low 62°/47°
Record high 81° in 2005
Record low 34° in 1967

Precipitation
Thursday 0.00"
Month to date 5.79"
Normal month to date 2.72"
Year to date 47.03"
Normal year to date 32.76"

SUN AND MOON

Sunset tonight 8:54 p.m.
Sunrise Saturday 5:31 a.m.
Moonrise today 6:44 a.m.
Moonset today 10:03 p.m.

First Full Last New
June 1 June 9 June 17 June 23

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Ursa Major will be nearly overhead before midnight and Cassiopeia will be low above the northern horizon.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

TOMORROW'S TIDES

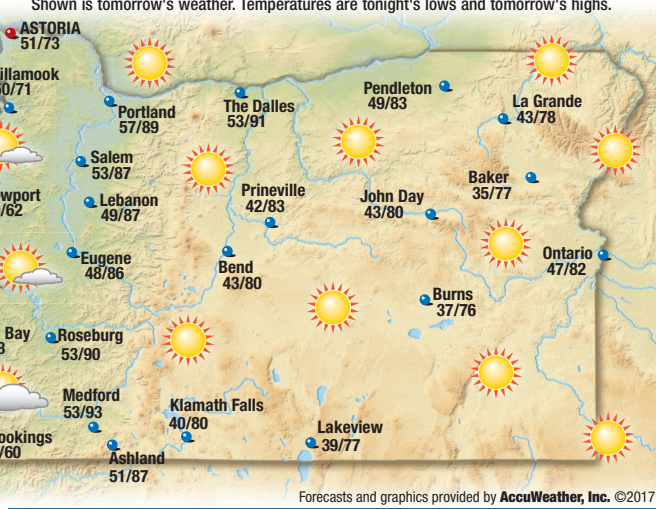
Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High	Time	Low
2:33 a.m.	10.0 ft.	9:39 a.m.	-1.8 ft.
4:03 p.m.	8.1 ft.	9:35 p.m.	2.1 ft.

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Sat.
Atlanta	83 65 s	87 71 pc
Boston	57 53 r	62 51 c
Chicago	72 56 t	77 59 pc
Denver	71 47 t	59 41 t
Des Moines	78 58 c	78 57 t
Detroit	72 57 pc	76 58 pc
El Paso	95 69 s	94 64 s
Fairbanks	54 33 c	58 36 pc
Honolulu	83 69 sh	83 70 sh
Indianapolis	78 63 pc	80 63 t
Kansas City	82 62 c	80 59 t
Las Vegas	89 68 s	90 71 s
Los Angeles	68 55 sh	69 55 pc
Memphis	87 74 c	86 74 c
Miami	89 79 c	92 78 pc
Nashville	86 69 pc	85 71 c
New Orleans	86 73 s	89 75 pc
New York	73 60 pc	72 58 pc
Oklahoma City	89 68 pc	94 63 pc
Philadelphia	75 58 pc	76 60 pc
St. Louis	86 67 t	87 69 t
Salt Lake City	70 48 pc	71 51 s
San Francisco	67 52 pc	67 52 pc
Seattle	77 56 s	83 58 s
Washington, DC	78 60 pc	78 64 t

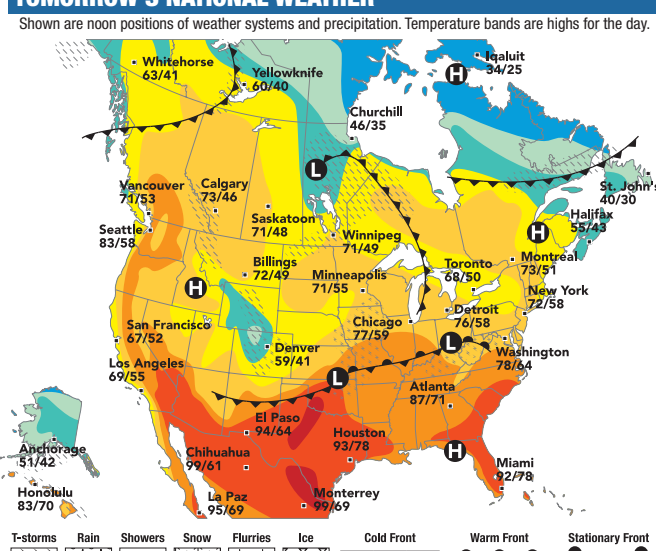
REGIONAL WEATHER



REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Sat.	City	Today	Sat.
Baker City	69 35 pc	77 38 s	Olympia	80 49 s	86 51 s
Bend	72 43 pc	80 46 s	Pendleton	76 49 s	83 53 s
Brookings	60 48 pc	59 48 pc	Portland	83 57 s	89 58 s
Eugene	80 48 s	86 49 s	Roseburg	85 53 s	90 54 s
Ilwaco	65 51 s	66 52 s	Salem	82 53 s	87 53 s
Klamath Falls	74 40 s	80 42 s	Seaside	68 51 s	69 52 s
Medford	87 53 s	93 56 s	Spokane	73 52 s	79 54 s
Newberg	82 54 s	87 55 s	Springfield	81 50 s	85 50 s
Newport	64 49 s	62 50 s	Vancouver	83 55 s	87 57 s
North Bend	67 50 pc	62 51 s	Yakima	83 51 s	89 53 s

TOMORROW'S NATIONAL WEATHER



Merkley to hold town hall

The Daily Astorian

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley will hold a town hall meeting on Sunday in Warrenton.

The Oregon Democrat is scheduled to appear at 12:30 p.m. at Warrenton High

School. The senator also has a town hall set for 4:30 p.m. at St. Helens Senior Center in Columbia County.

"In our 'We the People' democracy, town hall meetings are an essential tool for me to hear from Oregonians

and represent their interests back in D.C.," Merkley said in a statement. "I invite all residents of Clatsop and Columbia counties to come and discuss what we need to do to strengthen our state and our nation."

Price holds meet-and-greet

The Daily Astorian

All are welcome to meet with Astoria City Councilor Cindy Price at her May Salonica. The event is from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday

in the Flag Room at the Astoria Library, 450 10th St.

Residents can exchange ideas and information, ask questions and express concerns about ongoing and proposed city projects.

ON THE RECORD

Assault
• At 10:44 p.m. Wednesday, Jeanne Joe Hansen, 45, of Astoria, was arrested by the Astoria Police Department on the 1800 block of Fifth Street for fourth-degree assault. She allegedly assaulted a male family member, who sustained minor injuries.

DUII
• At 2:20 a.m. Thursday, Kevin J. Kelley, 55, of Winchester Bay, was arrested by the Seaside Police Department on U.S. Highway 101 near Avenue S for driving under the influence of intoxicants and refusing to take a breath test.

MEMORIAL DAY

In observance of Memorial Day on Monday, all federal, state, county and city offices and services, including Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart, Seaside and Cannon Beach city halls, are closed. All U.S. post offices are closed, and there is no mail delivery.

Astoria, Jewell, Knappa, Warrenton/Hammond, Seaside (including Cannon Beach and Gearhart schools) and Ocean Beach School District schools and Clatsop Community College are closed.

The Astoria Library, Seaside Library, Warrenton Library and all Timberland libraries in Washington, including Ilwaco, Ocean Park and Naselle, are closed.

The Port of Astoria offices and services are closed.

Garbage collection through Recology Western Oregon (covering Astoria, Seaside, Gearhart and Cannon Beach), city of Warrenton garbage collection, and Peninsula Sanitation (covering the Long Beach, Washington, Peninsula) are not affected by the holiday. Recology Western Oregon's transfer station is open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Peninsula Sanitation's transfer station is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Sunset Pool in Seaside is open from noon to 5 p.m. The Astoria Aquatic Center is open.

The Clatsop County Her-

itage Museum, Oregon Film Museum and Flavel House are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the Carriage House is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Uppertown Firefighters' Museum is closed. Capt. Gray's Port of Play and Lil' Sprouts are closed. Fort Clatsop is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Columbia River Maritime Museum is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Seaside Museum is closed.

Sunset Empire Transportation ("The Bus") is running. Weekend Seaside Streetcar is running from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The Daily Astorian offices are closed, but the newspaper printed and delivered as usual.

CORRECTION

Budget decrease incorrect — The Port of Astoria's \$13.6 million proposed budget for next fiscal year is about \$2 million less

than the budget for the fiscal year that ends in June. A IA story Thursday incorrectly said the decline would be \$7 million.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Port of Astoria Budget Committee, noon, 10 Pier 1 Suite 209.
Astoria City Council, 6 p.m., library work session, City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

LOTTERIES

OREGON

Thursday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 8-9-6-0
4 p.m.: 3-9-8-1
7 p.m.: 4-7-8-2
10 p.m.: 2-4-6-9

WASHINGTON

Thursday's Daily Game: 3-1-2
Thursday's Keno: 01-13-15-17-19-21-25-28-29-31-35-36-51-53-55-57-58-66-71-77
Thursday's Match 4: 08-20-21-24

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www.clatsopcc.edu

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