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ONE DOLLAR

New laws help screen mentally ill for suicide

Hospitals need protocol on ER patient releases

By **DERRICK DePLEDGE**
The Daily Astorian

Hospitals in Oregon will no longer be able to release patients who come into the emergency room in mental health crisis without taking steps to

prevent suicide and find treatment.

The new state law is another thread in the patchwork of care for the mentally ill, who often fail to get proper treatment even when their behavior escalates into an emergency.

The state requires hospitals that admit patients for mental health treatment to have a protocol at discharge to assess suicide risk, the capacity for self-care and the need for outpatient treatment, along with a transition plan and a timetable for

follow-up appointments.

But hospitals that do not provide mental health treatment, like Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria and Providence Seaside Hospital in Seaside, were carved out in a compromise to get the mandate through the state Legislature in 2015.

Hospital administrators had argued that doctors and nurses were not equipped to counsel the mentally ill on top of the stressful, around-the-clock demands of an emergency room.

“Basically, we didn’t buy that,” said state Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, D-Portland, one of the chief sponsors of the new law. “That’s not an acceptable answer to say, ‘We can’t do it.’ You don’t send somebody home who had a heart attack and say, ‘Sorry, we don’t have any help for you.’”

The new law, signed by Gov. Kate Brown in early June, takes effect this fall. Erasing the distinction between how patients in crisis are counseled in emergency rooms, compared to when

they are admitted to a hospital and discharged, comes as new research shows that emergency room interventions can significantly reduce suicide risk.

Hospitals will have to provide copies of emergency room release policies to the Oregon Health Authority. The Health Authority will compile the information in a report to the Legislature in January on the progress

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DYNAMIC DUO

FROM THE FRONT LINES TO FIREFIGHTING



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

TJ White, left, adjusts wife Shaunna’s safety equipment prior to a training exercise in Cannon Beach last week.

Military chops gives couple adventurous edge

By **BRENNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — For some couples, romance is a dozen red roses and a box of chocolates.

But for Cannon Beach volunteer firefighter Shaunna White, romance looks more like driving a big, red fire truck.

“When he’s sitting in the lieutenant’s seat, and I’m driving the truck, I mean, that’s the romance right there,” Shaunna laughed.

The lieutenant next to her is her husband, TJ White, to whom she’s been married for six years. The two both serve as volunteers for Cannon Beach Fire and Rescue, and have done so together for the past three years.

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Shaunna White, center, along with her husband, TJ, not pictured, prepares to participate in vehicle-extrication training with the Cannon Beach Fire Department last week.

Warrenton joins fight against flood plain

Coalition sues federal government over policy

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

Warrenton has joined a coalition challenging a federal biological opinion and newly proposed flood plain rules that some fear would hinder development.

Oregonians for Floodplain Protection, which includes several trade groups along with the city, has filed suit against the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service and Federal Emergency Management Agency in U.S. District Court. The coalition, which includes the city of Warrenton, argues the biological opinion and flood plain rules are based on inadequate analysis, would restrict development and have bypassed the public rule-making process.

In April 2016, the fisheries service, which administers the Endangered Species Act, issued a biological opinion regarding FEMA’s administration of the National Flood Insurance Program, which provides protection to 260 cities and counties statewide in exchange for their adopting certain flood plain management regulations.

The opinion included a six-part list of reasonable and prudent alternatives to FEMA’s implementation of the flood insurance program to avoid harming endangered species of salmon, steelhead and southern resident killer whales, along with their habitat.

The alternatives include interim protections to limit and mitigate for damage to salmon-bearing surface waters, new standards for identifying and mapping flood and erosion hazard areas, limiting of development in flood- and erosion-prone areas, using local governments to help collect and annually report flood plain development information and enhanced measures to ensure compliance.

FEMA, in coordination with the state Department of Land Conservation and Development, has started creating and implementing new flood plain development ordinances based on the biological opinion and recommended alternatives.

Public input

The coalition claims the implementation was done without the public input required by the Administrative Procedure Act. It seeks an injunction against the fisheries service to

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At county shelter, Vanderpool is a dog’s best friend

Woman helps dogs show off their best sides

When a dog acts and appears friendly, it is more likely to be adopted. So from the moment a new shelter dog’s photograph is taken to when a new owner takes it home, an even temperament is crucial to its adoption prospects.

At the Clatsop County Animal Shelter, which does not employ professional trainers, a volunteer who works more than 20 hours a week has been a major contributor to these efforts.

EVERYDAY people

Ashley Vanderpool works five days a week at the shelter. Her mission is to help ensure the dogs appear approachable to potential adopters, both in photographs and when people visit.

“They have very high standards,” Vanderpool said.

When a new dog enters the animal shelter, Vanderpool sometimes will snap the intake picture — the headshot photo commonly included in

adoption fliers, posters, ads and internet postings. Anyone who has taken a picture of an animal knows how difficult it can be to make them look into the camera. But volunteers like Vanderpool have the additional hurdle of framing the dog in the friendliest light.

“When I think of intake pictures, it’s pretty much the picture that gets them adopted,” she said.

Throughout the country, intake photos often feature animals who appear scared, an issue compounded by an unsightly background such as a kennel or white wall.

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Ashley Vanderpool with shelter dog Riley.

Jack Heffernan/
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