

# OPINION

editor@dailyastorian.com



# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873

**KARI BORGEN**  
Publisher

**JIM VAN NOSTRAND**  
Editor

**JEREMY FELDMAN**  
Circulation Manager

**DEBRA BLOOM**  
Business Manager

**JOHN D. BRUIJN**  
Production Manager

**CARL EARL**  
Systems Manager

## OUR VIEW

# State seeks public input on health care

**W**hat should health care in Oregon look like? The state's top health official is traveling the state, asking that question at 10 public meetings. The responses will help shape health care for about one-fourth of Oregonians, those who are on the state Medicaid program known as the Oregon Health Plan. Many of those clients work at low-wage jobs that lack health insurance.

However, the question matters to all Oregonians. The answers will help determine how our state and federal tax dollars will be used and, over time, how private health care will adapt and mirror the innovations in the Oregon Health Plan. Such practices as developmental screenings for children can become the statewide norm when instituted for the health plan, according to Patrick Allen, director of the Oregon Health Authority.

Allen has substantially improved the management, responsiveness and transparency of the state health agency since taking charge last year. Now he is on the road to hear from Oregonians before his agency takes its next steps in transforming health care.

In 2012, Oregon took a bold step to improve health care and control costs.

Coordinated care organizations — now commonly referred to as CCOs —



AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

Family nurse practitioner Terrance James examines Kamiyan Cooper, 1, as his mother Keshia Wilson looks on, in 2012 at Multnomah County's Mid County Health Center in Portland.

were established throughout the state to ensure that physical, mental and dental health care worked together for people on the Oregon Health Plan.

CCOs are to health care what a high-quality, lifetime bumper-to-bumper warranty is to auto maintenance.

Traditional health care is fee-for-service. Hospitals, physicians and other providers get paid according to the scope of care provided. (Fees can vary

widely based on government programs, private insurance or out-of-pocket payments).

In contrast, CCOs receive a set amount of government money each month for Oregon Health Plan clients. The CCOs are responsible for all the patients' care regardless of cost. Their financial incentive is to keep the patients healthy, thereby saving money — an incentive that can broaden how health

### IF YOU GO

A public meeting in Astoria is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 27 at the Astoria Armory, 1636 Exchange St. Meetings also are set for Bend, Coos Bay, Corvallis, Hermiston, Hood River, Klamath Falls, Ontario, Portland and Springfield.

### ON THE WEB

Provide feedback on direction of the Oregon Health Plan:  
[bit.ly/future-of-coordinated-care](http://bit.ly/future-of-coordinated-care)

care is delivered.

For example, consider a person with high blood pressure who forgets to take his medications and thus repeatedly winds up in the hospital emergency room. It makes more sense — financially, socially and psychologically — for a nurse to call or visit the patient each day to ensure he takes his medication.

Research indicates Oregon's CCO model is effective but imperfect. Mental and dental health care are not as well-integrated into the holistic approach. CCOs have saved the state money, but health-care costs continue to grow faster than the overall economy.

State officials have dozens of ideas for improvement. But they want, and need, to hear what the public thinks.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Proposed hotel is too tall, needs parking

The proposed four-story Fairfield Hotel with 66 guest rooms will be before the Astoria Design Review Committee (DRC) on Monday at 5 p.m. in the Astoria City Council chambers.

It is proposed for Second Street along the Riverwalk where the Ship Inn and Stephanie's Cabin are currently, and are planned to be repurposed. New projects must be required to provide the necessary parking for its intended users, as well as its employees. This has not been required for this project. To meet those needs, they must lease parking space at the empty lot east of Second Street.

You can email planner Nancy Ferber (nferber@astoria.or.us) before Monday's meeting to let the DRC know your thoughts. The Bridge Vista Overlay Zone permits this type of use and up to 30,000 square feet. This proposed hotel is planned for 29,782 square feet, but their covered parking space and decks/balconies are not included in the total. The maximum height permitted is 45 feet, but it is being recommended to allow different parts of the structure to exceed this "limit."

The problems of needing to exceed the height limit and the lack of on-site parking could be resolved by not allowing a structure with four stories and 66 rooms.

The Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission will hold their meeting on the project the same evening, starting at 7:30 p.m., also at City Hall. This river area is designated a landmarked site, because of the pilings, boiler remaining from the Whitestar Cannery, and the ballast rocks.

GEORGE (MICK) HAGUE  
Astoria

### Think about the children

To blame the Democratic Party for the tragedy that is taking place in Texas of children (as young as infants) being separated from their parents, warehoused in closed storefronts and contained in cages while the Republican Party controls the House, Senate and presidency is simply naive.

Surprise! The Republicans have the winning vote with or without Democratic support — why aren't they able to work within their own party to draft legislation and not shift blame for their inabilities? It seems like the dog ate their homework.

For the love of God — let's think about the children, regardless of what their parents have done.

JAMES B. RANDALL  
Astoria

### It's up to us to say 'no more'

Immoral. Unacceptable. Un-American. Separating children from parents seeking asylum at our border is horribly wrong, heartless and harmful. And it isn't just happening at our nation's border. This is happening right here in Oregon.

One hundred twenty-three people from China, India, Mexico, Honduras and Nepal

fleeing persecution in their home countries are being imprisoned as criminals at the federal prison in Sheridan, with some number having had their families ripped away from them. Why are we treating asylum seekers as criminals in violation of international treaties and laws?

I thank Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden and Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Earl Blumenauer for shining a bright light on this abhorrent President Donald Trump/Jeff Sessions policy. In past six weeks 2,000 children have been torn away from their parents at the direction of Trump and Sessions.

This is being done in our name. This is unconscionable. Traumatizing innocent children and criminalizing asylum seekers does not make America Great Again, now or ever. America must be better than this. It's up to all of us to say "no more." It's up to all of us to vote them out.

BEBE MICHEL  
Gearhart

### We still need Mr. Rogers

All that raucous rhetoric and brutish behavior regarding immigration distresses me. So I'm urging others to take a new look at the life and legacy of the late Fred Rogers. I think it's high time all of us did — because Mr. Rogers' message was so simple and compelling.

Fred Rogers believed that no matter what

we look like on the outside, no matter what color our skin is, what sex we are, or what physical disabilities we may have, everyone is special and deserves to be loved. In our nation so polarized, we need to heed that message more than ever.

The quietly radical model and mentor Fred Rogers (1928-2003) created 895 episodes of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" (1968-2001), constantly raising the bar on how children and adults should behave. An elderly, cool nerd who loved children, Fred was in every way the real McCoy, a genuinely warm presence who spoke to children as if they were sitting on his knee, gaining permission to pretend.

Fred's simple messages, delivered consistently and with unwavering honesty, helped children cope with life's issues, addressing anger, failure, disappointment, divorce, death — and even the live birth of a kitten in a 1986 episode. Yes, Fred Rogers was the genuine article, displaying vulnerability, openness and willingness to learn.

And that endeared him to children and adults.

Let's heed his wise counsel.

ROBERT BRAKE  
Ocean Park, Washington

### Instinct vs. intellect

From time to time, someone writes to praise President Donald Trump for his

anti-abortion righteousness. I must remind them that Trump was, previous to this last election, pro-choice, and he changed his stance for votes. It's hard to know if Trump actually has any values other than money, sex and power.

There are three major instincts imprinted in human DNA: Self-preservation (fight or flight), protection of offspring, and species survival. It is the last two instincts that motivate anti-abortion thought.

The last instinct has worked too well, as we have 7.4 billion people on an earth that can support only 2.5 billion. The Global Footprint Network calculates that the rate humans demand food, fiber, and carbon dioxide absorption now needs 1.7 earths to meet that demand.

We can continue to wipe out other species in our instinctive quest to cover the earth with people, or we could make birth control available to everyone, thereby reducing abortion. Managing our demographics would in time reduce poverty, disease and warfare; end the need for immigration; and heal the planet of pollution and degradation.

Democracy is imperfect. We have proof in a president who is a sexual predator, a racist, a pathological liar, a divider of a nation's people, a man who alienates our allies and praises our enemies, a man who puts himself before his nation.

DAVID FITCH  
Astoria

