



Healthwatch

by Steven Bailey, N.D.

Oregon Fair Share's "Health Care Issues Forum" at PCC, Cascade Campus, last Thursday reflects the broad based interest in adequate affordable health care. Members of the legislature, state agencies and private/public groups shared their views on a number of health care issues. Topics of the forum included the State Health Plan, Medicare assignment, the costs of prescription drugs and nursing home care.

Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury provided the opening remarks and, as usual, showed an interested, experienced and knowledgeable understanding of the critical health issues facing Oregonians. Having served as chair to the House Committee on Health and Resources in her legislative years, Ms. Kafoury combines her Salem experience with that of regional work as a county commissioner.

While mentioning the state's interest in health care and the '85 interim session's joint committee on health care, (combining State Senate and house members), Ms. Kafoury talked about the need to activate consumer involvement in health issues. Seeing the large medical lobbies effect their own concerns while evading the needs of the citizenry has prompted Ms. Kafoury to stress the need for grass roots participation. She specifically cited the Hospital Association's lobby of last session to limit their care for the indigent while receiving state monies, and the plight of Mariah Taylor, who as a nurse practitioner has lost funding of most of her past clientele. Consumer choice of care with fair reimbursement, support for the indigent, and unobstructed access to health care for all Oregonians are goals and dreams with Ms. Kafoury's vision.

The second speaker was Don Clark, of Central City Concern. Mr. Clark has helped develop a state health plan which would guarantee care for all Oregonians. This plan would pool state, federal, local, employer and private monies into one central fund which would guarantee that all Oregonians have access to health care. He cited statistics that at least 1 in 4 Oregonians do not have comprehensive health care and that his plan would guarantee care to all "for less money". Not too surprisingly, he noted that in 1983 the Oregon Medical Association's "number 1 legislative priority was to kill "SHIP" (State Health Insurance Plan)." It was mentioned that SHIP did not guarantee an un-obstructed choice of providers, so this plan could conceivably remove Nurse Practitioners, Chiropractors, Naturopathic Doctors and others from an active role in health care delivery.

Ruth Lathan spoke for Fair Share on the issue of Medicare Assignment. Oregon has risen from number 45 (13%) in state rating of Medicare acceptance in the

recent past to 21% acceptance which, while improved, still rates us in the bottom half. This means that fewer doctors in Oregon will accept Medicare assignment than in most states. The national average is about 30% acceptance. Fair Share endorses and supports the work of the Oregon Health Action Campaign (241-0258) which is seeking mandatory acceptance of Medicare assignment in Oregon.

Another interesting topic covered was the costs of prescription drugs in the Portland area. Fair Share conducted surveys of the costs of common prescriptions in over 30 stores. To everyone's surprise, they found Fred Meyers' prices to be the highest, chain stores in the middle and private stores were the lowest. This study also found that costs vary from store-to-store and by area. Prescriptions were highest in North Portland and lowest in South East. Fair Share (223-2981) has a history of these findings which are available to the public.

- Suggestions to help in buying prescriptions are:
- 1) Shop around, compare prices.
 - 2) Seek generic brands which average 34% lower than name brands and are normally identical to the name brands.
 - 3) You can call ARP (Association of Retired Persons) at 231-8078 to find cost comparison. For senior citizens ARP will deliver.

The final topic of this forum was nursing home care. Pam Dudda of Association of Friends spoke about her termination as an employee at a nursing home for reporting abuses at that home. Her story emphasized that many nursing homes function as related to income and numbers rather than individuals and personal care. Her association effected change within their particular home through direct actions of picketing and public awareness. But the problems exist throughout the state.

Penny Davis of Multnomah County Legal Aid spoke on the legal and regulatory problems of our nursing home system. Her report emphasized the need for quality care in homes and cited the long-term care Ombudsman Program as one current support network that may help. Grace Szigethy (774-8607), who is facilitator for the Ombudsman Committee, asked all interested people to become involved. A toll free line (1-800-522-2602) is available for assistance by this group. Fair Share is also working toward improvements in long-term care.

The meeting was long and filled with excellent ideas and plans. It is good to see Fair Share evolving into a broader based organization that is involving itself with key issues of the society.



Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of sociology and political science at Purdue University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

"The Summer of Racism, 1986"

The old political maxim, "one step forward, two steps back", characterizes the politics of racial equality this summer of 1986.

On the positive side, last month's Supreme Court decisions which reinforced the use of race-conscious affirmative action programs was a step forward. NAACP leader Benjamin Hooks described the decisions as a rebuttal to the Reagan administration's "pernicious efforts" to uproot affirmative action. Unfortunately, these decisions were sufficiently ambiguous that the forces of racial inequality could still maintain that the high court's rulings should not constitute the final word on the controversial issue. Reagan's solicitor general Charles Fried, who argued the losing side before the Supreme Court, offered these sour grapes: "We have said that race-conscious remedies which are victim-specific are never permissible. The court has said: 'Not never, but hardly ever.'"

The Reagan administration's fierce resistance to meaningful reforms which promote racial justice creates a political and social environment conducive to the growth of white racism. Whether Reagan is personally a racist or not is irrelevant. The fundamental issue is whether the administration's callous disregard for the socioeconomic welfare of national minorities, and its polemics and policies against civil rights laws and affirmative action, foster the ideological and political terrain so essential for the development of racist vigilantism. On balance, virtually all Black Americans agree: the noxious weeds of Ku Klux Klanism, Nazism, and even newer manifestations of white terrorism, are directly related to the Reagan agenda, albeit in a more extreme form.

Only three weeks ago, white extremists held the "Aryan Nations World Congress" in Hayden Lake, Idaho. Their manifesto calls for the secession of Idaho, Montana, Washington, Oregon and Wyoming as an exclusively white supremacist territory. The leaders of this racist formation call for unrelenting war against the U.S. government, which they term the "Zionist Occupation Government."

This June and July, at least six white supre-

macist rallies and protests were staged in and around Chicago. In Dolton, Illinois, Black youths were stoned and verbally abused in a July 4th parade by a white mob. On June 28, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan held a demonstration in Marquette Park. About three hundred local whites attended the rally, which was protected by several hundred police officers. Although most residents weren't persuaded to join the KKK, not a few shared its racist sentiments. As one white resident stated to the press: "The Klan is a bunch of goofs. But I don't want no niggers commin' into this neighborhood. I'll fight 'em. I'll kill 'em."

The latest manifestation of white supremacy, as recently cited by the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal, are the "skinheads" or "skins". The "skins" are white gangs who usually shave their heads, don paramilitary attire, and often tattoo themselves with Nazi markings. These young white men and women "are united in their hatred of 'peace punks', homosexuals, liberals and leftists, and in their frequent attacks also upon Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Jews." According to the Center's publication, the Monitor, "their record of violence in the U.S. is staggering considering their relatively small numbers. Since 1981, skins have been accused of murders, assaults and vandalism, sometimes on a weekly basis, in Detroit, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco, New York City, Denver, Baltimore, Boston, Austin, Philadelphia and Washington D.C." The motto of Atlanta skins is "SWP: Supreme White Power." In other cities, skins chant "Kill all niggers."

Certainly, the vast majority of Americans who actually voted for Reagan in 1984, as well as others who favor a conservative political agenda, are opposed to racist vigilantism. But the battle against American racism cannot be won solely by concentrating on these extremist sects. The real victory can only begin when we remove from public office through the political process all politicians who casually or deliberately provoke racial vigilantism by their own anti-Black, anti-Civil Rights policies.

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Politics Will Prevent Mayor from Naming Outsider As Chief

Since the resignation of former police Chief Penny E. Harrington, many have suggested that Portland Mayor Bud Clark go outside the state for his new Police Chief.

Proponents of an outsider for the chief's position claim there is no individual within the Bureau who is committed to Mayor Clark's community-oriented style of policing. Indeed the Mayor should consider this issue when selecting a permanent Chief.

However, given the political reality of such a move, it is unlikely that the Mayor will make such a bold political decision. There are two reasons for this prediction.

First of all, Mayor Clark does not want to anger upper-level managers in the Bureau and the Police Union again. One of the main reasons why the Mayor insisted on former Chief Harrington's resignation (in addition to the recommendation made by the Lezak commission that she be replaced) was due to political pressure placed on the Mayor by some cap-

tainants within the Bureau and the Union who wanted Harrington out as Chief. By forcing Harrington to resign or be fired, Clark has demonstrated that he is reluctant to push his police agenda too far on those managers and the Police Union.

Secondly, if the Mayor decides to select an outsider to head the Bureau, it could result in another Harrington-type situation, in that the new Chief, in an effort to carry out the Mayor's desires for a community-oriented Police Bureau, could face stiff opposition from some managers in the Bureau and the Police Union and, therefore, create an atmosphere that will lead to an all-out power struggle within the Bureau. This will result in what police term "low morale" among the troops.

Given the political ramifications of the situation, citizens of Portland shouldn't expect Mayor Clark to name someone from outside the Bureau as Chief.

Letters to the Editor

RE: FIVE-YEAR REVIEW HEARING

Dear Parole Board Member:

My growing frustration is justified due to the fact that your agency is performing inconsistently in regards to my having a scheduled five-year review hearing. True, my initial hearing was rightfully cancelled because I did not have the full five years completed.

Your Board Action Form dated July 9 reflected the same information but specified that another hearing would be scheduled after August third. Several weeks ago I received an additional notice stating a hearing date for August fifth. Again I was, figuratively speaking, slapped in the face and filled with disappointment. Through someone's error I was not listed on your copy of the hearing schedule. I do not want to believe you're not sincerely interested in reviewing the progress I've made since my initial board appearance of March 1982, my positive future plans, and making my cell available—pronto! Are you still unaware I have a Federal detainer? I come from a business background whereby the

team players of management work together with proficiency to help their paperwork progress steadily, timely, orderly, correctly. I'm willing to join your team to help it perform more professionally. As you already know, concerned citizens of Oregon are growing more displeased with your present mess.

I happen not to be one of your "favorite recalcitrant recidivists" who seem—by your standard of consideration—more eligible for release time after time after time. Because I do not fit that description, I guess I'm just an endangered species in this particular environment.

Frankly, I will not feel disappointed next time you cancel the review hearing, because this note has served as an adequate channel to exhaust my current frustration. My attitude has stabilized back to positiveness. So see you next Tuesday... maybe.

Respectfully,
Raymond Cornelius Alexander
OSP No. 40341

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