

Everyone is aware of the high cost associated with attaining an adequate health care plan. Indeed, the cost of health care in this country has resulted in many citizens not being able to afford any type of medical care.

This is why the Northeast Health Center, located at 5329 N.E. Union Avenue, is a valuable part of the community. "Our mission is to provide health care for people that would otherwise not be able to get health care," said Beverly A. Lauck, M.N., Manager of the Northeast Health Center.

The Center is one of seven health care clinics operated by Multnomah County. The medical clinic serves the areas north of the Banfield Freeway to the County line, with the exception of North Portland and the St. Johns area, Willamette River to 82nd Avenue.

Northeast Health Center offers the following services: primary medical care; blood pressure screening; communicable disease screening; family planning; immunizations; pregnancy testing; TB skin test (PPD); Well Child Clinic; prenatal care; and WIC, all on a sliding scale fee based on federal guidelines for poverty.

"We charge a minimum fee of \$5.00 to our clients seeking service here at the center. However, if the client cannot pay it on the day he or she is seeking service, we still see them. They must pay the fee of their next visit," Lauck said.

The Medical Center also charges a \$3.00 dispensing fee to clients who need medicine from the Center's pharmacy. Besides providing basic primary health care, Northeast Health Center offers specialty services and dental care on a limited basis to their regular clients.

"If one of our on-going clients is having cardiac problems and is not on any sort of welfare, medicare, or Blue Cross and met the income requirements, we give that person a voucher to take to the needed specialists. The program is called Health Source; we pay 50 percent of the AFS rates, the other 50 percent is the responsibility of the client," said Lauck.

The Dental Clinic, likewise, is for regular clients, with one exception. The Dental Clinic reserves two to four slots for emergency dental needs. In order to receive the emergency service, an individual must contact the Dental Clinic at 8:00 a.m. in the morning. Lauck said, "the reason why we do this is because the dental program is always filled. People tend to let their teeth go even worse than their bodies. We are one of the few dental clinics that provide on-going dental care to people at a reasonable price."

The concept of providing health care service for low-income people was started by Multnomah County more than 15 years ago. This is when the county started sending

Red Cross Home Nursing Course Offered

Now, through training, almost anyone can learn the basics of home nursing. The American Red Cross is sponsoring a five-part course, "Helping You Care." The course will be held at two locations:

American Red Cross
3131 N. Vancouver Ave.
Mondays, Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29
& Oct. 6
1 to 3 p.m.
284-1234, x303

Woodland Park Hospital
10300 NE Hancock
Tuesdays, Sept. 30,
Oct. 7, 14, 21 & 28
7 to 9 p.m.
257-5636

People with elderly parents or other family members who need constant attention but cannot afford private nursing care at home, or who do not want to send their loved one to a nursing home, now can receive appropriate skills for home nursing. The five-session class includes: coping with caregiving; understanding aging and the aged; medication use and misuse; caring with dignity and imagination; and creating a safe and healthy environment.

The cost for this class is \$20. Pre-registration is required.

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nurses into the community to conduct child clinics in local churches. It was during this period that the County realized a large segment of the population wasn't receiving proper health care. This led to the formation of the neighborhood Health Center.

Lauck said that the Health Center is there for the community. "We are trying to reach out to the community. We feel there are still a lot of people in the area that don't understand what service we provide or that we are here. Our strength here is that we want clients with legitimate health problems to come here for service. We want to be

their primary health care provider and have a relationship with them."

The Health Center has a field nurse team program, in which nurses make house visits to pregnant women who are high risks. The nurse provides prenatal counseling to that woman.

Lauck said many who visit the Clinic suffer from hypertension and diabetes. She blames this on improper diet, lack of exercise, stress, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse.

The Health Center serves 100 family-planning clients per month, 200 prenatal clients, and from 100-200 children. Lauck said many do not take advantage of the Well Child

Clinic. "Our pediatric services are under-utilized during the summer. No one can convince me that there are children in the community that do not need health care, whether we are talking about immunization, or well child examines, which provide regular checkups for children," said Lauck.

Northeast Health Center has a staff of 3 part-time women health care providers, one pediatrician, two nurse practitioners, and one physician. The center is an appointment clinic, which means that one must have an appointment in order to receive services at the health facility.



COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSE JEAN LYNCH DISCUSSES NUTRITIONAL PAMPHLET WITH CLIENT ELIZABETH BECKWITH.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

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