Volumn XXIII, Number 40 "Serving the community through cultural di ... ber 29, 1993

The Portland Observer

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METRO Life

Governer's Proclamation

MED Week '93

1993 Minority Enterprise Development Week

Health Consumer Analysis Shows Families Helped by Clinton Health Reform

"It's great for American families! The President's Reform will absolutely guarantee that you'll never lose your health insurance, no matter what," according to consumer advocate Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA.

The health consumer group came out strongly in support of the President's Health Reform.

"This plan will restore peace of mind to American families who worry they'll be among the two million Americans who lose coverage every month," Pollack said.

"President Clinton's Health Reform will ban the fine print that insurance companies use to dump you or deny you benefits you've paid for. It will crack down on insurance and drug company overcharges. We're very enthusiastic in our support for the reform," Pollack said.

Families USA released an analysis showing how Americans would be helped by Clinton's Health Reform. The report looks at the impact of reform on ten groups.

INSURED AMERICANS WHO WOULD LOSE THEIR INSURANCE

For the more than two million insured Americans who lose their health insurance each month, the Clinton Health Reform guarantees that no American can lose health insurance, no matter what. A health security card will guarantee all Americans comprehensive health benefits, even if they lose or change jobs, move out of state, get divorced, start a small business, or someone in the family gets sick. Families USA Rating: Best reason to support plan.

INSURED AMERICANS WITH INADEQUATE INSURANCE

Millions of Americans have inadequate insurance that can leave them with many thousands of dollars in medical bills. About 18 million insured Americans will have to spend at least one-tenth of their incomes on out-of-pocket health costs in 1993.

Clinton's Health Reform guarantees all Americans comprehensive health benefits, with strict limits on out-of-pocket costs. It bans all lifetime limits on benefits such as: hospital care, emergency services, doctor visits, pre-natal care and home health care for the elderly and disabled. Families USA Rating: Important new protection for insured Americans; savings for families hit by illness.

AMERICANS WITH HIGH PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

About 72 million Americans now lack insurance coverage for prescription drugs, and skyrocketing drug prices make it more and more difficult for Americans to afford their medications.

The Clinton Health Reform includes an important new drug benefit for Americans. No elderly American will ever again have to pay more than $1,000 a year for drugs, and most will pay far less. After meeting a $250 annual deductible, Americans of any age will have to pay no more than 20 percent of their prescription drug costs. Americans under 65 will have a $1,500 annual limit on what they can be charged, or $3,000 per family. Families USA Rating: Important step forward.

AMERICANS WHO RETIRE EARLY AND LOSE HEALTH BENEFITS

Many companies have cut back or eliminated health coverage for their early retirees, leaving many Americans without health protection. Clinton's Health Reform will guarantee health coverage to early retirees. With the federal government paying 80 percent of premiums for retirees between the ages of 55 and 65. The former employer or the retiree will pay the remaining 20 percent of the health premium. Families USA Rating: Protects retirees while taking pressure off businesses.

American Who Are "Job-Locked"

One in five workers report they or a family member can't switch jobs because new work offers limited or no health insurance. The Clinton Health Reform will absolutely ban insurance companies from excluding anyone, or any health condition, from coverage under any circumstances by 1997. Families USA Rating: Excellent solution to a serious problem.

AMERICANS WHO OWN SMALL BUSINESSES--AND THEIR FAMILIES

Small Business owners pay significantly more for health insurance for their families and workers than large businesses pay. Their premiums can skyrocket if an employee or a family member gets sick or injured. Insurance companies often refuse to cover an individual who works for a small business because of a health condition, or refuse coverage of a business because of the nature of the industry.

The Clinton Health Reform will guarantee that small business owners can buy insurance at the same--or lower--price as big business. The Reform will also limit insurance company premium increases, putting an end to health premium increases of 20 percent, 30 percent and more than small businesses have suffered. Also, insures will no longer be able to reject businesses or individuals for any reason.

In addition, small businesses will be eligible for significant new discounts. Families USA Rating: Tough on insurance companies, helps most small businesses greatly.

AMERICANS NEEDING LONG TERM CARE AT HOME

Almost every American family eventually faces a long term care crisis, and most Americans want their elderly parents to be cared for at home, rather than in a nursing home. But, many American families who need long term care at home receive no professional home care services, often because they can't afford help.

The Clinton Reform will provide home care help to Americans who most need the help. By 1996, Americans who need long term care will begin to be eligible for services that can keep them at home; the program is to be fully phased in by the year 2000. Families USA Rating: Valuable first step, an important new benefit for older Americans.

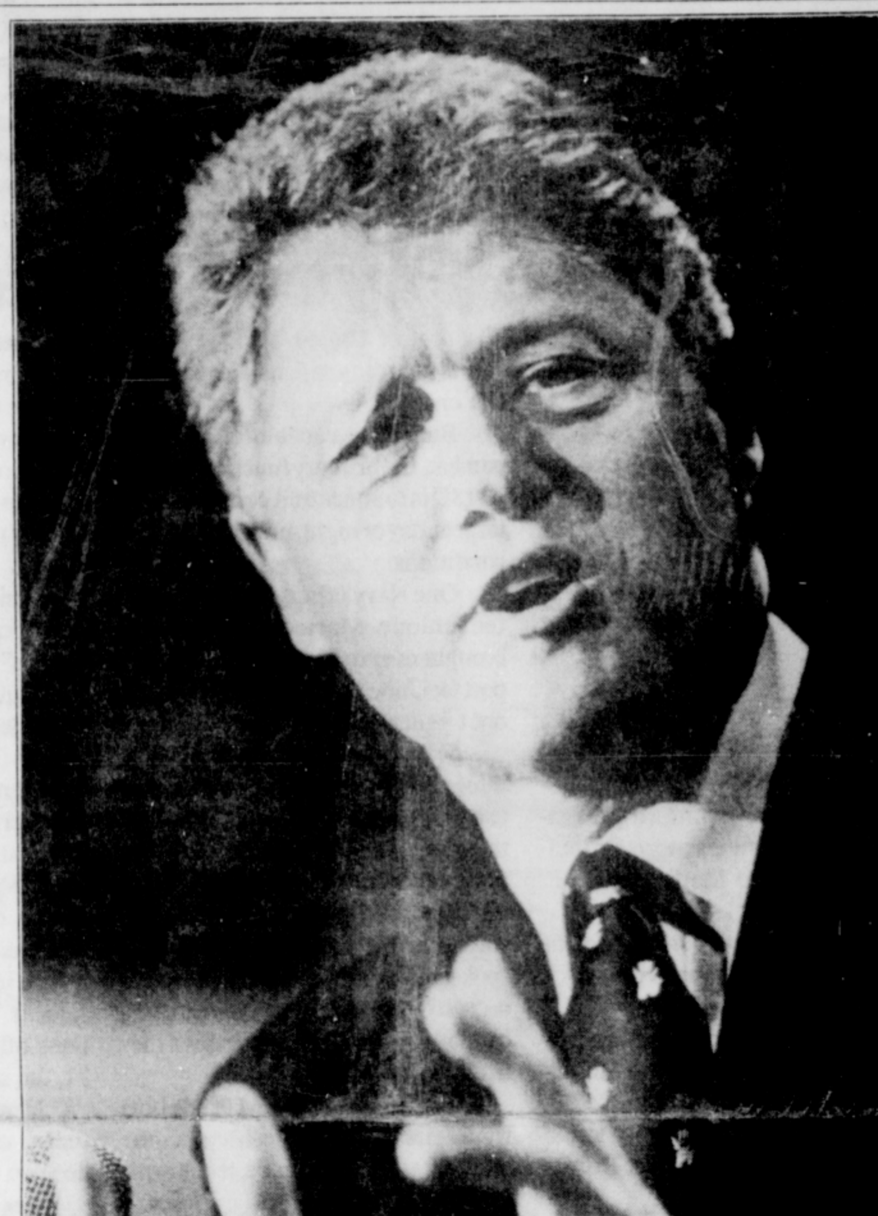
AMERICANS WHOSE EMPLOYERS CUT BACK ON THEIR HEALTH BENEFITS

About 40 percent of employees and their families are covered by employer health plans that are self-insured. Self-insured companies do not purchase health insurance from a private insurance company, opting instead to pay the cost of their employees' health coverage after sickness strikes.

The Clinton Reform will absolutely prohibit all employers and insurers from imposing caps or exclusions on coverage for specific medical conditions, and will ban lifetime limits on benefits. Comprehensive coverage will be required. Families USA Rating: Excellent new protection.

BUSINESSES WITH SKYROCKETING PREMIUMS

Health cost are eating away at business profits adn employee wagfes.



President Bill Clinton

Today, business spending for health are nearly equals after-tax profits, up from 40 percent in 1980.

The Clinton Health reform will strictly limit the amount insurance companies can raise premiums. By 1999, premiums will not be allowed to increase faster than inflation. Families USA Rating: Tough on insurance companies, good for families and U.S. economy.

AMERICANS ON MEDICAID WHO CAN'T GET HEALTH CARE

Last year, almost one of five adults on Medicaid were turned away by a hospital or doctor. Another 20 percent had to go to an emergency room for care because they did not have a regular physician.

Under the Clinton Health Reform, Medicaid recipients will be enrolled in the same health plans as other Americans, and get the same high quality care. Families USA Rating: Ends the scandal of Medicaid failure.

Families USA is the health consumer group fighting for health and long term care reform.

First Interstate Begins Innovative Community Lending Review

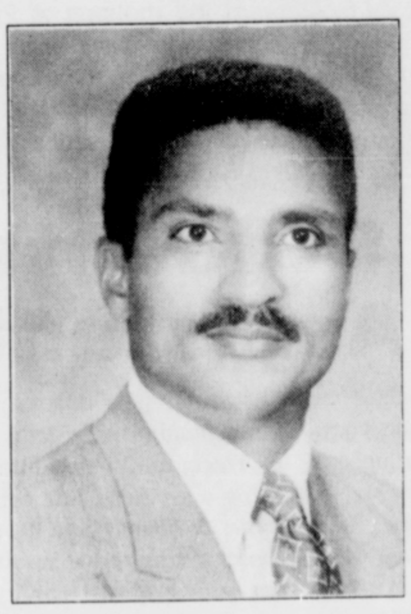
A promotion and a new appointment mark an innovative approach to home mortgage lending at First Interstate Bank.

Ralph Nickerson, former manager of First Interstate's Portland Community Lending Center, has been promoted to Assistant Vice President and named the bank's Production Review Officer.

Nickerson's prime new responsibility will be to review all home mortgage loans that have been recommended for declination. Nickerson's prime new responsibility will be to review all home mortgage loans that have been recommended for declination. Nickerson will be working with the bank's home loan officers to find ways in which First Interstate can work with a loan applicant to qualify for the loan.

"Nickerson's new position is to help us make loans," said Dick Anderson, First Interstate's senior vice president who is responsible for residential real estate loans.

"This is a deal-maker position," he added, nothing that First Interstate plans to add a second production review officer position besides Nickerson's to work with other loan



Ralph Nickerson

officers throughout the bank's five state Northwest Region."We want Nickerson and the loan officers to work together to find a way we can make the home loan," Anderson stated.

For the last two years Nickerson, a 1974 graduate of Pacific University (Forest Grove, OR), had been manager of First Interstate's Portland Community Lending Center, a project he was also instrumental in opening.

The Community Lending Center was designed to increase First Interstate's presence in Portland's inner city residential neighborhoods and to provide additional access to home mortgages by all Portland area residents with added emphasis on ensuring that access to mortgages by low and moderate income families and individuals.

Nickerson's replacement as Community Lending Center manager is Loren A. Dixon, who brings to the position significant experience in inner-city lending and expertise in providing residential real estate loans to low and moderate income customers.

Dixon, a Piedmont neighborhood resident, most recently was the affinity group lending manager at U.S. Bank, where he also served as a regional operations officer and a community outreach officer. He previously had been an assistant vice president at American State Bank.

Dixon also serves as chair of the education committee of the Portland Housing Center and as treasurer of Esther's Pantry, Inc. a not-for-profit food bank providing services for persons with AIDS.

"Residential lending is a core business of First Interstate," Anderson added, "and besides being good business, it is good for the community or neighborhood in which we make the loan and good for the person or family buying the home. We want to make sure every mortgage applicant gets all the attention they need.

"A lot of banks have what are called "second-look" programs," Anderson said, and this concept is getting some attention nationally, but what is really innovative about this new position that we will look at every home loan application that is recommended for declination before it is formally declined to try and find some way to make the loan."

"Some second-look programs just have another underwriter do a paper review of an applicant's file to confirm the original officer's position," Anderson said, "but ours is a proactive position designed to let us make loans. We want to consistently ensure that every potential borrower receives all the assistance possible from the bank that will allow us to make the mortgage loan," Anderson said.

Access to home mortgages is a national concern of banks and other mortgage granting institutions as well of the federal government and community groups. The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) requires that banks and others detail and report to the government all lending activity that is to purchase, refinance or improve a dwelling. The same regulations also require that lending institutions make that information available to the public.

Historically, HMDA data has shown that while income and credit history are key elements in applicants being denied a home mortgage loan, banks and other mortgage granting institutions need to improve their marketing and outreach techniques to reach all population and market segments to increase the number of total mortgage applications submitted by all demographic and income groups.

First Interstate Bank has established relationships continuing relationships with several community housing and development groups in the Portland metro area and throughout Oregon and the entire Northwest.

In the Portland area, First Interstate has worked with the Northeast Community Development Corporation to provide funding for the Nehemiah Grant Project that will build or rehabilitate 250 Northeast Portland homes over a three year period. The bank also provided the financing for the Nehemiah demonstration project completed in mid-1993 that was the prototype work for the entire project.

First Interstate is also one of the funding banks for the Portland Housing Center, a not-for-profit agency providing educational programs for prospective home purchasers. With the Portland Development Commission (PDC), First Interstate has also provided financing over the last three years to support PDC's Portland Homestead Program.

First Interstate Bank of Oregon, with a 169 branches throughout the state, has been helping Oregonians with their personal and business banking needs since opening in Portland in July 1865.

Furse Applauds President's Efforts

Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse praised President Clinton's effort to tackle the difficult issues of health care reform, but is worried that his plan may be too rough on small businesses and may not go far enough to reform the health care system.

"I am encouraged by some of the President's goals which provide for universal access, personal choice of provider, comprehensive coverage, including coverage for pre-existing conditions and cost containment," Furse said. "I look forward to thoroughly examining the structure of Clinton's plan to ensure it achieves those goals in the most cost-effective manner.

"I am concerned that the costly layer between doctors and patients remains under this plan. Simplification will allow doctors to do what they do best: treating patients, not pushing paperwork. Oregon is a small business state and I am concerned about financing this health care package entirely through employer mandates.

"Over the next six or seven months, Congress will be debating this plan. I look forward to receiving public input over this initiative to ensure that Americans help craft a health care system that truly serves them best."

Furse, who is a cosponsor of the single-payer American Health Security Act (HR 1200), is committed to ensuring that meaningful health care reform is enacted in the 103rd Congress.