

HEALTH

Dental Care Not Available to Many Oregonians

Many people in Oregon do not have access to oral health care services and face barriers in receiving basic preventive dental services.

These are the conclusions of an Oregon Health Division task force on Access to Oral Health Services. Other issues and recommendations for improvements are outlined in the group's recently released report.

Disabled, elderly and poor populations have the most serious access problems and the highest rates of oral disease. Public water supplies lack fluoridation, not enough children receive dental sealants, and large groups of people are unable to access regular oral health services, according to task force findings.

Eighty-three percent of general practice dentists are located in the six counties in the Interstate 5 corridor.

Rural counties face an undersupply of dentists; three counties have no dentists and another has one dentist to serve its 8,450 people.

Oregon has one dental school, located in Portland. Most of its students spend clinical practice time at the school. Very few have clinical experiences outside the Willamette Valley.

The five dental hygienist education programs in the state are in Portland, Gresham, Eugene and Klamath Falls. Few hygienists practice beyond those areas, partly because they are required to practice under the supervision of dentists and partly because they prefer to remain where they have already established working relationships.

The proposed addition of dental

services to the Oregon Health Plan is a positive step toward improving access. However, a serious problem remains because of a shortage of providers that exist in some areas. It is also unclear how much capacity each dentist has for serving Medicaid clients and how many they are willing to include in their practice.

The report outlines 13 strategies for increasing access to services and for improvement in the health of Oregonians.

"The task force will continue to monitor implementation of these recommendations and to evaluate our progress," said Dr. Grant Higginson, acting state health officer and task force member. "The strategies we propose can make a significant improvement for many Oregonians who lack access to oral health services."

Free Diabetes Screening Offered By Urban League And Lions Foundation

The Urban League of Portland will co-sponsor a free comprehensive diabetes screening from 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday, February 25, 1995 in the Safeway Store parking lot at 5920 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Coupons good for a screening and a drawing for Trail Blazer tickets will be given to everyone attending the League's Equal Opportunity Day Dinner on February 23rd. However, anyone may participate in the free screening.

According to the American Medical Association, African Americans are at higher risk of having diabetes. More African American adults are diagnosed with diabetes (19% to 12% for whites); die from diabetes (2-to-1 for whites); and suffer serious side effects (one study showed blacks have five times the rate of kidney failure as whites).

The free screening is a response to one statistic that we can control: at least half of African Americans with diabetes are unaware they have the disease. Screening is most important for individuals with high risk factors, including being overweight and having a family history of diabetes.

The screening will be conducted by The Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation's Mobile Screening Unit. Participants must be 18 years or older and have taken no food or beverage for three hours prior to screening (water and black coffee are OK).

"Early detection is often the key to preventing serious health problems," said Urban League president and CEO Lawrence J. Dark. "We welcome the chance to work with the

Lions Foundation to give our constituents information they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Building a community that is health conscious, by understanding prevention and taking action, is part of the Urban League's vision."

If diabetes is detected after the screening, financial assistance is available for a doctor's visit for people who cannot afford care.

For more information, contact Scott Maguire, Executive Director of The Lions Foundation at 229-7399.

The Urban League of Portland is a non-profit, community-based human service, economic and social justice agency serving at-risk youth and families, students, job seekers, and seniors in the metro area. The League is one of 113 local affiliates of the National Urban League.

Dental Care Offered To Children

In celebration of National Children's Health Month and as part of the continuing efforts of the dental community to meet Oregon's oral health needs, the Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association will be conducting a statewide sealant program for underprivileged children during the month of February.

Volunteer hygienists will be placing sealants, a clear or tooth-colored resin, on the chewing surfaces of the back molars. Sealants are a very effective method of preventing decay and along with adequate fluoridation are crucial in heading off the higher treatment costs resulting from dental neglect.

The Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association will be working in conjunction with five grade schools and five dental hygiene programs in Oregon, the Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland Community College, Mt. Hood Community College, Lane Community College and the Oregon Institute of Technology.

Kaiser Permanente Offers Health Education Classes In North Portland

Several classes open to the public are being offered in North Portland this winter and spring through Kaiser Permanente. For registration information, call Kaiser Permanente's Health Education department at (503) 286-6816.

Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to serious health problems. Kaiser Permanente offers several classes where you can learn self-care skills to control your diabetes. The three-session "Diabetes: Basic Education" will be from 2 to 5 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 27, 28 and March 1, at Kaiser Permanente's Education & Con-

ference Center (Town Hall), 3704 N. Interstate ave., Portland. Cost is \$15 for Kaiser Permanente members, \$75 for the general public. A spouse or other support person is encouraged to attend at no extra charge. Please register at least 10 days before the class starts.

"Emergency Care of the Young Child" is a first aid and CPR program for parents of newborns. The two sessions will be from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Thursdays, March 2 and March 9, at Kaiser Permanente's Education & Conference Center (Town Hall), 4704 N. Interstate Ave., Portland. Cost is \$30 for Kaiser Permanente members/couples, \$60

for the general public. Please register at least 10 days before the class starts.

Living with an overactive child can put stress on the entire family. Learn more about coping with this condition in "Parenting a Child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Ages 12 and Under)." Classes will be from 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays, March 2 through April 27, at Kaiser Permanente's North Interstate Services Building, 7201 N. Interstate Ave., Portland. Cost is \$75 for Kaiser Permanente members/couples, \$140 for the general public. Please register at least 10 days before the class starts.

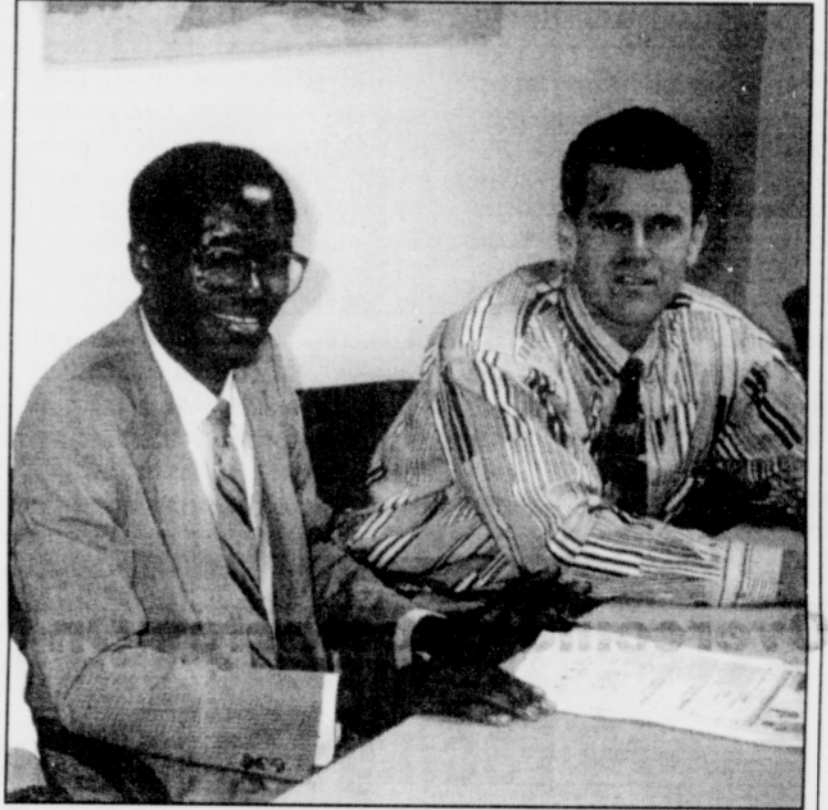
Cameroon Pharmacist Studies In Portland

A pharmacist from the Cameroons will be spending two months in Portland to gain new skills and ultimately improve patient care in his country.

Nkwenti Achu directs a pharmacy in the Cameroons which serves as a training center for University of Nigeria students, the University of Uganda and other universities.

He will spend one month working with Dr. Kate Farthing, assistant professor of pharmacy for information sciences and director of the Oregon State University/Oregon Health Science University Drug Consultation Center. The pharmacy in Cameroon is also used as a reference center for drug information.

Achu will also spend a month working with Dr. Dean Haxby, assistant professor of pharmacy and family medicine. He will present a seminar in Cameroon at future dates in Corvallis and Portland. Achu, an OSU alumnus, said many of the health policies in Cameroon have been based upon health procedures adopted in Oregon.



Professor Peter Vanderveen welcomes Nkwenti Achu (left) of the Cameroons to the Oregon State University Pharmacy College in Portland.

25th
ANNIVERSARY

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Lb.

- Value Pack
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