

Health & Science

Furse honored Nationally on behalf of people with Diabetes

The Honorable Elizabeth Furse, was honored by the American Diabetes Association, Oregon Affiliate, during their Annual Gala Auction on November 8, 1997.

Because of her efforts on behalf of people with diabetes, Medicare will reimburse for supplies for all patients with diabetes, effective July 1, 1998. There will also be dramatically increased spending on diabetes by the Department of Health and Human Services. Grants totaling over \$150 million will be awarded over five years toward research into the prevention and cure of type 1 diabetes. An additional \$150 million in grants over five years will be awarded for providing services for the prevention and treatment of diabetes among the Native American population. Furse led the non-partisan effort to get this coverage included in the Balanced Budget Act, which was signed by President Clinton in August.

The American Diabetes Association, serving Oregon and SW Washington, has renamed their dia-

betes grant program in honor of Furse. The program, now called the Elizabeth Furse Diabetes Grant Program, provides local funding for proposals with a clear education or community service orientation. Funding for this year's grant program is made possible through individual donations and a grant from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund.

The Spirit Mountain Community Fund, established by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Spirit Mountain Casino, has approved a grant of up to \$50,000 in honor of Congresswoman Furse to match individual donations. Kathryn Harrison, Chair of the Grand Ronde Tribal Council, made the notification of the grant monies during the Auction.

The Spirit Mountain Community Fund was created earlier this year under an historic gaming compact between the Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde community and Oregon's Governor, John Kitzhaber. The Tribe annually contributes six percent of its net profits from Spirit

Mountain Casino to the Spirit Mountain Community Fund to be used for grants to community projects in 11 northwestern Oregon counties. The estimated amount for the Spirit Mountain Community Fund in 1997 is \$2 million.

Diabetes is a serious disease in which the body either does not produce insulin (type 1) or does not effectively use or produce adequate amounts of insulin (type 2). Insulin is a hormone that allows blood sugar to enter the cells of the body and be used for energy. Diabetes can lead to severely debilitating or fatal complications, such as blindness, kidney and heart disease, stroke and lower-extremity amputations. It is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States; currently, there is no cure.

The American Diabetes Association is the nation's leading voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information, and advocacy. Founded in 1940, the Association is represented in every region in the country.

Shabazz joins cancer fight

A Portland leader in health issues is sharing information gathered at a national conference on prostate cancer in the African American community.

Aleem Shabazz, executive director of the Northeast Health Resource Center of Portland and coordinator of the National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer Mens Health Committee, was a delegate at the Nov. 19-22 conference in Houston, Texas.

The meeting brought together a wide range of disciplines for the purpose of building a collaborative agenda for action against prostate cancer, a disease of increasing incidence among African American men.

The event was sponsored by the American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Cancer Institute.

Local sponsors included the Portland Observer, National Black Initiative on Cancer, American Heart Association, Northeast Health Resources Center, Muslim Community Center of Portland, One Stop Records, African American Health Coalition, Reflections Coffee Shop and Reality Word Progressive Reality.



Aleem Shabazz, executive director of the Northeast Health Resource Center in Portland represented Oregon at the national conference on prostate cancer in the African American community.

Survey says women want more accuracy from Pap Smear Testing

Also cite fearful waiting between abnormal tests

Complete Survey Results Available Upon Request.

A survey of more than 800 women in Los Angeles, Sacramento, Calif. and Portland, Ore. was conducted by independent research firm Wilson

Associates to determine women's understanding of the need for Pap testing for cervical cancer. The random survey is the first in a series of Healthy Habits Surveys sponsored by United HealthCare of California designed to learn more about how families in the western United States take care of themselves.

"The survey showed that a high percentage (80%) of women with an average age of 39, received regular, yearly Pap tests," said Art Small, M.D., medical director of United HealthCare of California. "This is wonderful news. What surprised us, was that many women, who were so good about regular testing, also expressed concern about the accuracy of the conventional Pap smear itself, and shared the anxiety of waiting several months for a new test if their first test was abnormal."

Forty percent of women surveyed were aware of issues or problems concerning accuracy of the

conventional Pap smear. According to the National Institutes of Health, 20-40% of tests will yield abnormal results, potentially indicating cancer. One-third of women surveyed were aware of this fact.

Women who receive an abnormal reading require follow-up testing, which often takes place 60 to 90 days later. Thirty percent of those surveyed had received an initial abnormal reading, some of which were indeed "false positives." The great majority of these women (82%) felt extremely anxious about their health during this waiting period.

According to Juan Felix, M.D., USC School of Medicine, Women's Hospital, "Women with a minimally abnormal pap can now have an additional test performed on the same sample that would help their physician determine if they would require more frequent follow-up. The additional testing would also take advantage of leftover cells remaining in the liquid preservative to detect human papilloma virus (HPV), the agent responsible for cervical cancer."

In response to women's concern about accuracy, United HealthCare of California will be offering the new Pap test — called the ThinPrep Pap

Test—developed by Cytec Corp., to its members. The test, which was approved by the Federal Drug Administration in 1996, is administered in the same way as the traditional Pap smear, by collecting cells from the cervix in an in-office procedure. But that's where the similarity ends. The ThinPrep procedure improves the way cervical cells are prepared. Rather than smearing a small portion of the cervical cells onto a slide, the collection device is rinsed in a vial of preservative solution, capturing virtually all of the cell sample. The patient's specimen is then sent to a laboratory where a ThinPrep instrument disperses and filters the specimen to reduce blood, mucus, and inflammation and applies a thin, even layer of cells to a microscopic slide. The result of this process is a uniform preparation of well-preserved cells representative of the cervix and ready for microscopic examination and diagnosis.

"From a single visit, it is possible to determine if a patient would require treatment for an abnormal pap or return to routine follow-up — minimizing the anxiety involved in repeat office visits," said Felix.

United HealthCare of California is offering this new Pap testing technology to its members begin-

ning this month, as many women use the holiday period to visit their doctor for their annual tests.

"What we learned from this survey is that 95% of the women questioned would feel more confident about a more accurate test," said Small. "Even though it will cost us more to offer a new test and goes beyond what we are required to do, we believe our members demand and deserve the best procedure. This new test can detect more accurately for cancer or at least eliminate an unbearable waiting period for results."

Virtually all cervical cancer is treatable if caught early. The American Cancer Society estimates that in 1996, there were nearly 16,000 new cases of invasive cervical cancer reported, and 65,000 cases of carcinoma in situ, a pre-cancerous condition. Cervical cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in women, with 450,000 cases reported worldwide.

The Healthy Habits Surveys are designed to measure health awareness levels of Californians and residents of other Western states so that United HealthCare of California can launch appropriate health promotion and awareness campaigns.



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The Flu

By PETER CASANO M.D.

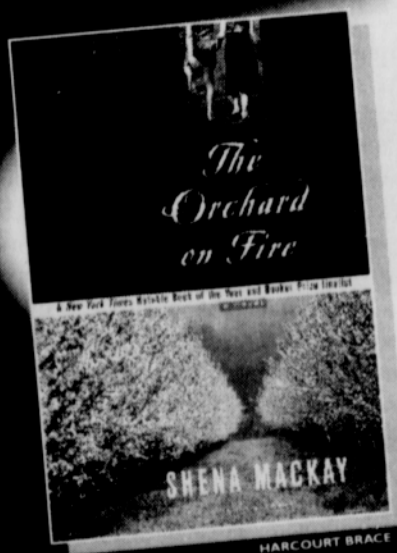
A specific viral disease characterized by fever, runny nose, cough, headache, malaise and swollen nose and throat mucous membranes. The flu usually occurs in the winter and occurs in epidemics. In some severe cases, the flu can actually be fatal.

What causes the flu? The flu is caused by a virus called influenza type A. The virus changes slightly from year to year, but is predictable. This

yearly change is the reason that the vaccination is different from year to year. The virus is spread from person to person by direct contact and by air-borne droplets. Unlike the viruses that cause the cold, we can fight influenza A virus with both vaccinations and anti-viral medications. Signs and Symptoms. For 48 hours after exposure, the virus replicates and spreads throughout your body. The onset of symptoms is rapid, with high fever and

chills. Muscle aches in the back and legs, and headaches are common. Later the throat, lungs, nose and eyes become affected. The cough can be severe and produce colored sputum. The illness usually begins to resolve in two to three days. Cough can persist for weeks. In persons who are very young, very old, or have lung disease, pneumonia and bloody coughing can develop. Influenza can be fatal in these patients.

New York Times Notable Book of the Year and Booker Prize finalist, *The Orchard on Fire* by Shena Mackay "celebrates love and friendship and the resilience of children. . . . Enthralling from the first page to the last," says the *Boston Globe*. Set in an English village, the charm of the local landscape contrasts sharply with the prejudices and vagaries of its adult inhabitants.



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