

# Family Living

## State Medicaid Office To Implement Lead Testing For Up to 8,000 Portland Children

■ Participating are six pre-paid health plans, besides the state Medicaid office

The state Medicaid office through its contracted HMOs in the Portland area will implement blood testing for lead toxicity among Medicaid-eligible young children in 22 Multnomah County ZIP codes next year.

Up to 8,000 children to age 6 are expected to be tested. The state will use experience in Multnomah County to address the issue state-

wide.

The state's focus on lead exposure was prompted by Multnomah County's ranking of 48th among more than 3,000 U.S. counties for risk of elevated lead levels in young children.

"This has been identified as a problem in parts of Multnomah County but many children elsewhere in the state may also be at risk for elevated lead levels," said Hersh Crawford, state Medicaid director in the Oregon Department of Human Resources.

Lead exposure can cause serious health problems ranging from learning and behavioral disorders to seizures, coma and death. Nearly 900,000 children across the nation are believed to have elevated levels of lead in their blood.

Paint used in pre-1950 houses is the major source of lead toxicity in children. Under the new policy, Crawford said all Medicaid-eligible children in 22 Multnomah County Zip Codes with the highest proportion of such housing would be given a blood test when they

visit a physician. The ZIP codes are 97201-06, 97209-20, 97227, 97231-32, 97266.

Crawford said the new effort takes effect during the first quarter of 1999.

He said nearly every county in the state has one or more ZIP codes in which a quarter of the houses were built prior to 1950, according to federal Census data, and that results in Multnomah County may indicate whether the lead-testing requirement should be added in other counties.

Crawford said doctors currently seeing Medicaid-eligible children to age 6 are required to use a questionnaire to screen for lead toxicity, and to test for it when information indicates they should, he said under the new initiative health plans will provide lead-toxicity testing for all Medicaid-eligible children to age 6 in the selected ZIP codes. He said the new initiative applies to health plans, but not to those plans covering only dental or mental-health services.

For other Multnomah County

ZIP codes, Crawford said, a task force is looking at all children regardless of payer in developing recommendations for physicians to administer a short lead-screening questionnaire, to do blood testing if warranted, and to prepare lead-education resources.

He noted that sources of lead poisoning include not only lead-based paint but also dishware containing lead or parents' jobs or hobbies where lead is used. National data show that more than a quarter of the children with elevated levels of lead are members of families with middle or high incomes.

## Toy Truck Helps Oregon Families Stay Warm This Winter

■ The toy truck offer is just one way PGE is working with Oregon HEAT to meet the needs of families

Oregon HEAT, an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to helping families in need pay their energy bills, has teamed up with Portland General Electric (PGE) to offer miniature replicas of PGE bucket trucks. For each limited-edition toy truck purchased, \$5 is donated to Oregon HEAT.

This durable toy truck, only available until October 31st, comes complete with working headlights and taillights, flashing yellow caution lights and a bucket that extends up to 18 inches. It also doubles as a coin bank. To receive an order form, please call Oregon HEAT at 503.612.3790.

The toy truck offer is just one way PGE is working with Oregon HEAT to meet the needs of families in crisis due to unemployment, accidents, sickness and other unforeseen circumstances. PGE contributes \$43,000 in cash annually to Oregon HEAT plus a significant amount of in-kind services, such as office space and fund raising assistance through bill inserts and public relations support.



A miniature replicas of PGE bucket trucks.

Most beneficiaries of Oregon HEAT are single-parent households with children under the age of five and senior citizens living on a fixed income. The organization also provides emergency energy assistance to people with disabilities, many of whom are unable to work a living-wage job. Last

winter, over 15,500 Oregonians received Oregon HEAT assistance.

"When a family is forced to choose between the basic necessities of life and heating their home, Oregon HEAT is there to lend a hand," says Jay Formick, Executive Director of Oregon HEAT. "This winter, we'll help

approximately 5,000 families stay warm while they're getting back on their feet."

Oregon HEAT is supported entirely by donations from around the state. During the winter of 1997-98, Oregon HEAT received close to \$630,000 from more than 17,000 Oregonians. Those wishing to help this year should look for a donation envelope in their PGE or Pacific Power bill during November, or send their donation directly to Oregon HEAT, P.O. Box 127, Tualatin, OR 97062. To receive a toy truck order form or for more information on Oregon HEAT, please call 503.612.3790.

## The City's Largest Rummage Sale

The Catlin Gabel School campus is buzzing with activity in anticipation of the upcoming 54th Annual Catlin Gabel Rummage Sale. In preparation for the city's largest rummage sale, hundreds of students, parents and community volunteers are busy collecting, sorting and pricing thousands of items donated to the sale. The Rummage Sale will be held Thursday, October 29th, through Sunday, November 1st, at the Expo Center. Held every fall, this one-of-a-kind sale raises money for financial aid for children who otherwise would not be able to attend the school.

Just a few unique items that can be found at this year's sale include:

\* A collection of 19 "Wizard of Oz"

books, circa 1908-1936. Bidding opens at \$1,350.

\* Two Kawasaki jetskis, with a trailer, valued at \$1,000.

\* Women's Harley-Davidson leathers.

\* A contemporary bedroom ensemble and an 1880s Queen Ann Victoria bed.

The sale opens on Thursday, October 29th at 5 PM until 9 PM, with all items marked up 25 percent, for that day only. The sale continues Friday, October 30th, from 10 AM to 9 PM; Saturday, October 31st, 10 AM to 6 PM; Sunday, November 1st, 10 AM to 3 PM. Customers can take advantage of "blue light" specials announced throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday.

## Tips Can Prevent Children From 'Goblin' Excess Treats

Monstrous amounts of trick-or-treat candy doesn't have to be a Halloween nightmare for parents.

With a few tricks of their own, parents can provide a balance between sugary treats and fright-night festivities. "Children caught up in the thrills of other Halloween activities are less likely to be obsessed with bags of candy," says Dr. Debby Demory-Luce, a nutritionist with the USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

She offers these suggestions:

\* Conjure up activities that focus on Halloween fun, not sweet treats. Carve Jack-O-Lanterns, create a creepy "graveyard" on the lawn, host a Monster make-up party, or organize a neighborhood scavenger hunt. "Few adults

remember how much Halloween candy they received as a child, but almost everyone remembers whether they had fun," Demory-Luce says.

\* Scare up healthy treats for little goblins who knock at the door. "What you hand out sends a strong message to your children," Demory-Luce says. She recommends small bags of pretzels and mini-boxes of raisins, or non-food treats such as stickers, pencils, and coins.

\* Limit the length of trick-or-treat outings to decrease the amount of candy children bring home. This is a lot easier to do when children know that other activities are planned.

\* Encourage children to sort through their bags and decide how many and which pieces of Halloween candy to keep. "Learning to make good food

choices is instrumental for children to develop self-control and healthy eating habits," Demory-Luce says. This also gives parents the opportunity to screen treats and discard any with loose or suspicious wrappings.

\* Allow children one or two treats Halloween night, then store the remainder out of sight. "It's fine to give one or two treats a day in lunches or after school," says Demory-Luce. "But avoid using candy to reward good behavior because it can increase a child's preference for sweet foods."

\* Consider donating any excess treats to senior citizens' homes or organizations serving the needy. "Good planning can help keep children from goblin' up too many Halloween treats while still letting the ghouls times roll," she says.

## Oregon Food Stamp Recipients Receive An Increase

Food Stamp Recipients Receive An Increase Beginning This Month

Oregon's 114,000 food-stamp households are receiving small increases this month in the amount of their allotment and in the amount of money they can earn to qualify.

The changes, affecting about 233,000 people, became effective October 1st. Amounts received are based on household size, income and expenses.

For an individual, the monthly food-

stamp allotment will increase by \$3, from \$122 to \$125, if the individual has no other income or expenses. The individual also can earn more - gross income to qualify must be \$873 a month or less, compared with \$855 before October 1st.

For a family of four, the food-stamp allotment increases by \$11, from \$408 a month to 419, if they have no other income or expenses. Gross monthly income to qualify for food stamps rises

from \$1,338 or less to \$1,371.

The federal government revises food-stamp payments annually to reflect changes in food, housing and other costs.

The federally financed food-stamp program, intended to ensure access to nutritious diets, is administered in Oregon by the Adult and Family Services and the Senior and Disabled Services divisions of the state Department of Human Resources.



Just think: Your son is bright, healthy and headed for college one day. You love the direction your

career has taken. You're doing a lot of the things you planned and even a few you didn't. Living life to the fullest is easy when you have family behind you. American Family Insurance. Call and talk to one of our helpful, friendly agents. You'll find out why we're consistently rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best, the insurance rating authority. Then, go on. Dream. Plan. What you do next is up to you and we'll be here to help you.

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