

1999 McCall Forum Features Koop vs. Califano on Health Care

Is health care a human right? Or is it a matter of individual responsibility?

These questions will frame the debate for Pacific University's 1999 Tom McCall Forum. The 17th annual public affairs forum is titled "Health Care: Right or Responsibility?" and will be held on Thursday, March 4, 1999, at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland.

Speakers for this year's McCall Forum will be C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General under Presidents Reagan and Bush; and Joseph Califano, former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Carter.

"As a society, we've rejected nationalized health care and instead de facto have created a highly politicized two-tiered health care system: privatized health care now dominated by HMOs, and a government-based system for the elderly, Medicare, and the poor, Medicaid," said Professor Russ Dondero, faculty coordinator of the Forum. "But 15 percent of the population at any time

is not covered by any health insurance. Doctors increasingly feel second-guessed by HMOs or government bureaucrats. And it seems the public expects health care issues to be solved with new technologies and miracle drugs."

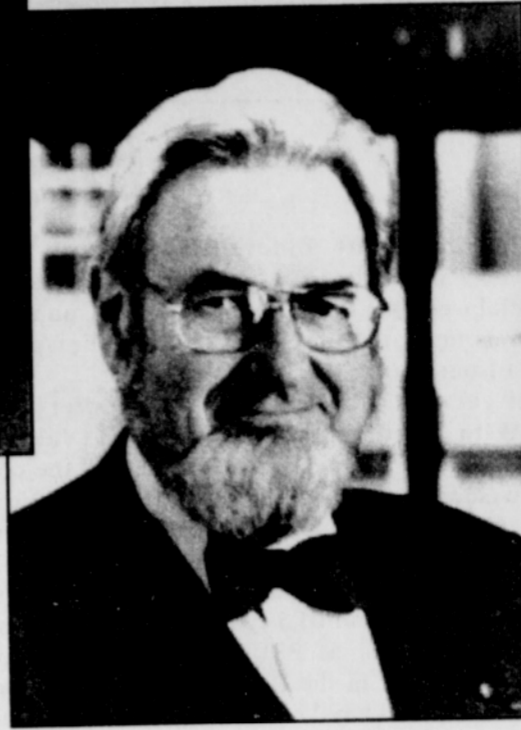
"Our two guests together have decades of personal experience working in the health care system," Dondero said. "Most people are familiar with C. Everett Koop's war on big tobacco and use of the bully pulpit of the Surgeon General's office to get public attention to health issues."

"Califano's high-profile public service began as a top aide to LBJ, helping create the Great Society programs including Medicare and Medicaid. At HEW, he was the first to take on the tobacco lobby and other tough issues such as abortion and soaring hospital costs. He has written extensively about the subject of health care."

C. Everett Koop became the U.S. Surgeon General in November 1981 and served both President Reagan



(Left) Joseph Califano



and President Bush in that capacity. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Dr. Koop graduated from Dartmouth College and from Cornell Medical College. Following his appointment by President Reagan, Dr. Koop advised the public on the dangers of smoking,

environmental health hazards, and immunization and disease prevention. He became the government's chief spokesman on AIDS. He presently is the Elizabeth DeCamp McIntery Professor

at Dartmouth College, his alma mater.

Joseph Califano served as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Carter Administration beginning in 1977. During his tenure the department underwent the most complete reorganization in 25 years. Following service in the Navy, Califano was named General Counsel of the Army. Califano was appointed special assistant to

President Johnson, for who he developed the legislative program and coordinated economic policies. The New York Times called him "Deputy President for Domestic Affairs." Presently he serves as chairman and president of The Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA).

The Tom McCall Forum was founded in 1982 by the students and faculty of Pacific University's Politics and Law Forum. Over the years, the Tom McCall Forum has become the premier public affairs event in the Northwest, drawing national political figures each year to Portland for a spirited debate between a liberal and a conservative of national interest. Previous debaters have included: James Carville, William Safire, John Sununu, Pierre Salinger, Robert Bork, Jesse Jackson, Mario Cuomo, and Dan Quayle.

Reserved-seat tickets for the 1999 Tom McCall Forum are available through the Pacific University Box Office (503) 359-2918 or Fred Meyer Fastixx (503) 224-8499.

Nerve graft during prostate removal might help prevent impotency

HOUSTON — A nerve graft performed during surgical removal of the prostate might help prostate-cancer patients maintain their ability to have an erection.

This experimental technique and positive results from two patients who have had the graft are reported in the January issue of the Journal of Urology by physicians at Baylor College of Medicine and The Methodist Hospital in Houston.

"Impotence is very common side effect of prostate surgery, because the nerves that control the ability to have an erection might be removed or damaged," said Dr. Edward Kim, a Baylor urologist and principal author of the paper. "We are investigating the potential benefit of grafting nerves taken from the ankle onto the nerves that control

erections during the surgical procedure known as a radical prostatectomy."

The nerves from the ankle are sewn onto the erection-producing nerves that run along the right and left sides of the prostate. Researchers hope that new nerves will regenerate through the graft, which will serve as a "safety net" by providing a scaffolding that can maintain the electrical nerve pathways needed for an erection.

"Our first patient, a 56-year-old man, was able to have a partial erection six months after the surgery and intercourse 15 months after surgery," Kim said. The second patient, 58, was able to have intercourse eight months after the surgery.

"We expect it to take at least two years for patients to appreciate the full benefit of this procedure, because both

ends of each nerve graft have to develop connections," Kim said.

Although removal of the nerve from the ankle can produce a small sensory deficit in the foot and lower leg, the problem is likely to go away as other nerves compensate for the loss, he said.

Only men who are potent prior to prostate surgery can potentially benefit from this type of nerve graft.

Kim and colleagues in Baylor's Scott Department of Urology and Division of Plastic Surgery are evaluating results from 50 other men on which this surgery procedure has been performed.

Each year, 340,000 men are diagnosed with cancer of the prostate, the walnut-sized sex gland that makes the fluid to carry sperm. About 50,000 men each year have their prostate removed. If both sets of nerves that run along the sides of

the prostate are severed during surgery, the patient has less than a two percent chance of being able to develop an erection strong enough for intercourse.

"The nerve graft might be able to spare many men a problem that can be physically and psychologically debilitating, but we need to complete long-term studies of at least 100 patients to justify recommendations for this procedure," Kim said.

Other Baylor researchers who coauthored the paper are Dr. Rahul Nath in plastic surgery and Dr. Thomas Wheeler in pathology. The Prostate Cancer Research Initiative in the Scott Department of Urology at Baylor is supporting the study. Members of the department are now performing radical prostatectomies with nerve grafts.

National Publication Upscale



Local Businessman Paul Knauts will be featured in the March issue of the National Publication Upscale magazine as Role Model

Fat-blocking drug helps obese patients lose weight

HOUSTON — A two-year study of nearly 900 obese patients has shown that the drug orlistat (Xenical), in combination with a moderate-calorie diet, produces weight loss, helps prevent weight regain, and provides other health benefits. Results of the study, conducted at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and 17 other research centers nationwide, are published in the Jan. 20 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

"We are extremely encouraged by the outcome of this research, which was the largest and longest of any double-blind, placebo-controlled U.S. trials to test the effectiveness of a weight-loss medication in obese patients," said Dr. John Foreyt, principal investigator for the Baylor site.

Orlistat, which has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration, is a "fat blocker." Unlike obesity drugs that manipulate the brain to decrease appetite, orlistat prevents about one-third of fat consumed during a meal from being digested so that the body will not absorb it.

Participants in the study had to be at least 30 pounds overweight. They were randomly assigned to receive orlistat or a placebo, a harmless sugar pill.

During the first year of the study, all participants were confined to a low-calorie diet. Those receiving orlistat lost 8.8 percent of body fat; the placebo group lost only 5.8 percent. At the end of the first year, 65.7 percent of the orlistat group lost more than five percent of their initial body weight, compared to 43.6 percent of the placebo group. Almost 39 percent of their initial body weight, compared to nearly 25 percent of those who were given the placebo.

During the second year, participants were placed on a moderate-calorie diet to see if they could maintain their weight loss. Participants given 120 milligrams of orlistat regained 63.4 percent of their lost weight.

Patients who were treated with 120 milligrams of orlistat throughout the two years lost 7.6 percent of their initial body weight by the end of the study, while those given a placebo showed only a 4.2 percent loss through-

out the two years.

In addition to weight loss, orlistat significantly reduced total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, and the ratio of LDL to high-density lipoproteins, glucose, insulin, and blood-pressure levels.

Throughout the study, orlistat was well tolerated by participants. The most common adverse reactions were intestinal, reported by 79 percent of the orlistat group and 59 percent of the patients given a placebo.

This study is definitely good news for obese people who have difficulty regulating the amount of fat in their diet and whose weight is interfering with their health," said Foreyt, professor of medicine and director of the Behavioral Medicine Research Center at Baylor. "Study participants also had to exercise, which serves as a reminder that an effective weight-loss program cannot rely on medication and diet alone."

The research was funded by Hoffmann-La Roche, manufacturer of orlistat.

PCC Unions to Launch Labor History Mural

The Portland Community college Federation of Classified Employees and PCC Faculty Federation will hold a celebration to Kick-off on a labor history mural project. The kick-off celebration will be held from 1-2 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10th in the upper mall of the College Center at Sylvania Campus and will feature the group General Strike singing labor songs as well as a labor history display. Cake and refreshments will be served. At noon in the same location, the featured speaker for the Newspeak program will talk on issues vital to working people.

The PCC Federations recently received a \$2250 grant from the Regional Arts and Culture Council for the mural project. The mural has also

secured funding from a number of sources internal to the Portland Community College system, a substantial donation from the Plumbers and Steamfitters union Local 290, and monies and resources from the two PCC federations. AFT-Oregon provided funding for the Kick-off event.

The mural will be placed on the unions' exterior office at the Sylvania campus. Some of the goals of the mural are to increase the visibility of and participation in the unions as well as educate members and the community-at-large on labor history while highlighting the diversity of those involved in labor struggles. Laura Campos, a classified employee who conceived of the mural and continues to be actively involved in the

project, noted that "the imagery will install pride and an appreciation of the accomplishments, history, and cultural diversity of the labor movement and highlight the critical contributions individual workers make in our everyday lives. It will build on, expand, and strengthen the dialog that has already begun between PCC and the community and celebrate the kinds of activity that occur within these walls."

If you are interested in participation in this project, call 977-4482. Skilled muralist interested in being considered for the project coordinator position should submit a resume and work samples to PCCFF, PO Box 19389 Portland, OR 97280 by February 10, 1999.

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