

Preventing Aids among Young African-Americans is Goal of New Kaiser Permanente Study

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(PORTLAND, Ore.) — Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research (CHR) has begun a new study to understand how young African-American couples can protect themselves against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

The CHR is collaborating with the Pacific Institute of Women's Health on the PARTNERS study, which is funded through the Public Institute of Women's Health on the Partners study, which is funded through Public Health Institute in Los Angeles. The study's goal is to develop culturally appropriate health education programs that will help young African-American women and their partners prevent infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), as well as unplanned pregnancies. All three issues are of concern within African-American communities. HIV/AIDS is particularly troubling given the high death and incurable nature of the infection. Nearly half of all AIDS cases — and 56 percent of those in women — have been in African Americans, even though they make up only 13 percent of the U.S. population. African-Americans account for 63 percent of all new HIV infections among people 13 to 24.

Even though the death rate from AIDS has fallen, it remains the leading cause of death among African-Americans age 25 to 44.

Statistics from the Oregon Health Division's HIV/STD Program show a similar picture locally. Cumulative rate for HIV diagnosis per 100,000 population (1989 to 1997) among Oregonians of African descent were higher than for any other population group — more than five times higher than whites and 13 times higher than Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders.

"Programs to prevent HIV/AIDS, STDs and unplanned pregnancies among young African Americans

have not been very successful," says Nancy Vuckovic, PhD, principal investigator for the PARTNERS study at CHR. "We have to better tailor prevention programs to the needs of the people we're trying to help. Learning how and why young couples make sexual decisions, especially about condoms use, will help us design prevention that work for both partners."

"HIV and AIDS are serious problems in the African-American community," says Barber Taylor, president of the African American Health Coalition and Chair of the Community Advisory Board at CHR. "More and more African-American

are getting these diseases, and too many people in our community still believe that AIDS is not a problem that affects us. We need education programs that will change this perception, we need prevention programs that will help people adopt safer sexual behavior, and we need these programs to be based on research that understands the feelings, needs, beliefs and behavior of African-Americans."

The first of the PARTNERS study's two phases is just beginning in the community. Each woman age 18-25 who agrees to join the study will be asked to interview her male partner to also participate. They will be interviewed by African-Americans trained in discussing sensitive issues and ensuring confidentiality. A female interviewer will interview men and a male interviewer will interview women. Each participant will receive \$30 at the end of the completed 60-minute interview, plus a list of health services available in the community.

African-American women age 18 to 25 who have a male sexual partner are encouraged to participate in this study. If you would like to join the study or would like more information, call (503) 499-5540.

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the service they received and found working in person with IRS employees and managers to resolve their tax problems was very effective."

If you are unable to come on March 3 and have a tax problem that you haven't been able to resolve, please call (877) 777-4778.

IRS Problem Solving Day Coming to Vancouver March 3

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON — Taxpayers living in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon who have a problem with their federal taxes have an opportunity to get help at the IRS Problem Solving Day in Vancouver on Wednesday, March 3.

On that day, IRS officials will be on hand between 9 a.m. 6 p.m.

at the IRS office in Vancouver, 500 West 12th Street, to meet and work with taxpayers to resolve problems such as unfiled returns, missing refunds, or an unpaid tax bill.

In conjunction with Vancouver Problem Solving Day, the IRS will hold an offer-in-Compromise and interest owed when there is doubt

the full amount owed will ever be collected. Due to recent tax law changes, the IRS' authority to make offers-in-compromise is available to more taxpayers. Interested persons can make an appointment for the workshop by calling (503) 326-3295.

Persons interested in attending the Vancouver Problem Solving

Day can schedule an appointment by calling (503) 326-3295. An appointment is not necessary, but it will ensure preliminary research is completed. Taxpayers should bring any pertinent records and copies of correspondence with them.

The Problem Solving Day in Vancouver will be the eleventh

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Education is the key to stopping inhalant use

The recent death of a Keizer teenager breathed butane fumes is a tragic example of the need to educate young people and parents about the dangers of inhalants, says Barbara Cimiglio, director of the state Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs.

"These kinds of deaths are avoidable if people just understand more about inhalants," Cimiglio said. "Vapors and gases from substances such as butane, glues, paint and other fluids are poisons that can cause instant death."

She says education of both young people and parents is the strongest deterrent against inhalant use. "We must act now to teach kids that sniffing inhalants can be deadly."

Inhaling vapors, or "huffing," is a growing problem, particularly among middle-school students. The numbers can vary from year to year, but surveys of Oregon sixth, eighth and 11th graders show that about 10 percent of students in those grades have used inhalants.

The National Inhalant Prevention Coalition in Austin, Texas, estimates that more than a million Americans used inhalants to get high last year, and that one in five students has used inhalants by the eighth grade.

"Most parents in the dark regarding the popularity and dangers of inhalant use," NIPC says. "But children are quickly discovering that common household products are inexpensive to obtain, easy to hide and the easiest way to get high."

Inhalants can include model airplane glue, spray paint, hairspray, deodorant, paint thinner, vegetable cooking spray, dessert topping sprays, butane and even felt-tip markers.

Some inhalants have popular nicknames. Butyl is called "rush," "locker room," "bolt" or "climax."

Nearly all abused inhalants produce effect similar to anesthetics. Users can feel anything from slight stimulation to loss of consciousness. However, any user at any time can suffer what is called Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome.

Inhalant use can also damage the heart, kidneys, brain, liver, bone marrow and other organs.

Because so many abused substances are common household products and difficult to keep away from kids, Cimiglio says it's vital for parents to educate themselves and in turn to their children about the dangers of inhalants.

"This is a matter of life or death," Cimiglio says. "The only way we can stop this problem is to take it seriously."

Information on inhalants is available from several sources. Among them are the Oregon Prevention Resource Center in Salem, 1-800-822-6772, and the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition, 1-800-269-4237.

Coalition for School Funding now announces School Funding Target

In a press conference at crowded Beaverton High School, the Coalition for School Funding Now today announced its school funding target for the 1999 legislative session: a total of \$5.1 billion for the next two-year budget cycle.

"What we are saying here today is that \$5.1 billion is the bare minimum legislators can vote for while still being able to say that they did the right thing for our school, our children and our future," said Coalition Co-Chairs Ken Thrasher and Larry Ogg. Thrasher is the Chief Administrative Officer for Fred Meyer, Inc.; Ogg is President of Bank of America in Oregon and SW Washington.

The Coalition is Oregon's most prominent statewide school funding advocacy group. Made up of parents, students, seniors, community leaders and small and large businesses, the Coalition used grassroots and high profile lobbying to transform the school funding debate during the 1997 legislative session. The most critical element was when the Coalition defined a minimum acceptable level of funding for Oregon's K-

12 public schools. The Coalition achieved its goal, and many legislators identified the Coalition as the single most significant force during the legislative session.

Coalition leaders said that the \$5.1 billion figure reflects the minimum necessary to achieve the Coalition's two basic principles for the 1999-2000 school funding package: "After years of repeated cuts, no Oregon school district should be forced to cut the level of services currently offered to its students," said Thrasher. "And we must start making progress on achieving the school improvements goals mandated by the legislature almost 8 years ago."

Recommended Budget

Press conference participants also expressed concern as the level of funding contained in both the Governor and Senate President's proposed budgets. "If the current proposals were passed, it would mean serious service cuts in my district, and in districts throughout Oregon," said Corvallis School Superintendent Skip Liebertz. Added Gresham High School Senior John Marshall: "These

cuts aren't just figures on a piece of paper. They are cuts that hurt my classmates and my friends." Because of the success and credibility of the Coalition and its members, many observers believe that the announcements of this year's funding goal will set the standard for the current legislature to meet.

Coalition Co-Chair Larry Ogg pointed out that accountability is also an important part of the Coalition's goals. "We believe that school districts need to be specific about what they are doing to control costs, and clear on what Oregon's students and taxpayers will be getting for additional funds."

Finally, Coalition leaders emphasized the importance of a long-term solution to Oregon's school funding woes. "This budget should establish a stable, adequate base of school funding that will extend into the future," said Ogg. "Oregon cannot afford to come back every legislative session and discuss whether or not to cut schools. This is the year that we must begin to move forward, instead of continuing to fall behind."

Lincoln City Resident joins together to win \$18 million Megabucks Jackpot

Lincoln City — There was plenty of excitement, smiles, and tears of joy for Gay Simonis and her family as they claimed the \$18 million Megabucks prize from the Feb. 10, drawing. The \$18 million jackpot is second in size only to the \$23 million Megabucks jackpot won July 30, 1991.

Her son, and four daughters, among whom the prize was equally divided, accompanied Simonis, of Lincoln City. Simonis chose the "Investment Fund" option, which provides Megabucks jackpot winners with one single payment equal to one-half the advertised jackpot. Each winner received a check for their portion of the prize, which was \$1.5 million before state and federal taxes were withheld. The winning ticket was purchased at Safeway #415, at 4101 Logan Road, in Lincoln City. The winning numbers were 8-16-17-25-32-41. There were more than 10,000 winners from the Feb. 10, drawing.

Sharing the prize with Simonis are her son Lewis Franke, Jr., of Clackamas, and her daughters: Sherry Kammerer of Lincoln; Sharleen Swope, of Milwaukie; Lydia Snyder, of Depoe Bay; and Teresa Pena of Lincoln City. Simonis, who's winning ticket claimed the \$8 million. They brought a single \$1 ticket. Franke smiled when he mentioned that is investment in the winning ticket was 17 cents.

Counting shared jackpots; Simonis and her family bring the total to 199 Megabucks jackpot winners. Since the first Megabucks tickets went on sale Nov. 20, 1985, Megabucks players' have won more than \$385 million in prizes.

Since April 1985, more than \$4.5 billion in prizes have been paid to Oregon Lottery players and over \$2 billion has been provided for economic development, job creation and education in Oregon.



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