



Metro

Drug, alcohol use up 25% since 1995, says survey

BY GIDEON LANTZ
OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A survey released recently by the state's Department of Human Services, DHS, shows illegal drug and alcohol abuse and dependence up 25 percent in Oregon from 1995. An estimated 376,536 Oregonians—approximately one in nine, now need treatment. The estimate was 1 in 16 in a similar 1995 survey.

"The cost to Oregonians is enormous in accidents, chronic unemployment, child abuse and crime, as well as the human cost in broken homes," said DHS Director Gary Weeks.

Overall alcohol use and

dependence during the period from 1995 to 1999 declined by nearly 26 percent from 1995. However, use of marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and hallucinogens such as LSD increased by 232 percent, and surpassed the use of alcohol in Oregon for the first time. Marijuana remained the most used drug although there were increases in all categories. In Multnomah County percentages for alcohol and drug use in 1997 among adults were 14.6 percent. That rate increased in 1999 to 18.7, according to statistics available from the DHS Director Gary Weeks office. Statistics were unavailable for Northeast Portland at presstime because the information was not compiled for that area, said Luther Stohs, Senior

Research Analyst for the State's Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Overall drug abuse by women increased from 1.4 percent of the population to 7.6 percent from 1995 to 2000, an alarming increase of 442 percent. That compares with an increase from 4.9 percent of men to 13.3 percent, or up 171 percent.

One piece of mixed news is that the age of abusers is now increasing. "That leads us to believe youth prevention and intervention programs are working. Unfortunately that means older abusers are now parents—and role models," Weeks said.

"It's critical to get people into treatment," said Weeks. "Those who abuse alcohol or other drugs

endanger others as well as themselves by driving, operating equipment, using weapons, and taking care of children while under the influence.

"And, in economic terms, we know that each \$1 spent on treatment returns an estimated \$5.60 in public savings on reduced welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, crime, courts and imprisonment," Weeks said. Approximately 600 of the 12,000 people surveyed have been recruited for follow up, to see whether to receive treatment and how effective it is.

The surveys were conducted by Bill Feyerherm, Ph.D., of Portland State University for 1999 and 1995 for DHS.

Pacific Power from page 1

pledges for the year of more than \$26,000.

Amina Anderson, BUF executive director, said the project will help agencies build their capacity to serve the community through centralized access to resource materials, technology and space. The center's new library and computer rooms for use by area community development organizations will open this fall.

"Our goal is to establish an incubator, complete with training and support for agencies working to develop the community," Anderson said. "Nonprofit agencies play an important role in neighborhood revitalization. Providing access to resources, training and space for doing business is critical to the long-term development of community-based organizations."

New grants in May included an open Meadow Learning Center, \$1,000, for the Restoring the Urban Environment program. The Early Head Start Family Center of Portland, \$5,000 to furnish classrooms for infants and toddlers in the childcare program. The Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, \$5,000 to support business mentoring and incubator programs. The North-Northeast Economic Development Alliance, \$5,000 for operations and staffing for the alliance's mission of recruiting and retaining jobs.

Other year 2000 grants for the area included \$10,000 to Campfire for operating support of programs offered to students from inner North/Northeast as part of a three-year, \$30,000 commitment, and \$12,000 to Self Enhancement, Inc., as payment on a four-year \$50,000 grant sponsoring an incoming class of students now at Jefferson High.

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