

Portland
Observer
Health

Stop-Smoking Program Wins First Place National Award

A progressive, multifaceted smoking cessation program conducted by Providence Health System has won a national achievement award.

The program has reduced smoking rates lower than state and national averages and has become a model for other programs throughout the country.

The first-place honor by the American Association of Health Plans in managed care achievements for tobacco control programs was made Oct. 12 on behalf of the Providence Health System Smoking Prevention Task Force headed by Dr. Charles Bentz, a Providence St. Vincent physician and leader in tobacco control initiatives.

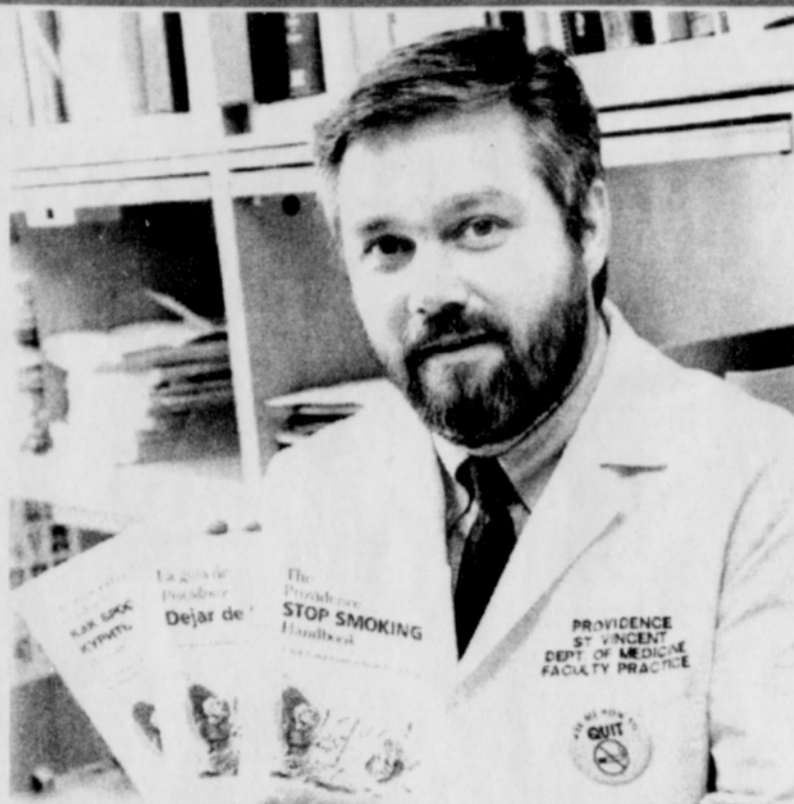
"We're proud to be a leader in this field of preventive health care," said Bentz. "The award represents the successful collaboration of many professionals and integrated efforts to help our patients and our communities become smoke-free."

The Program's success is attributed to several key components, including improved access to and a variety of smoking cessation efforts for members of Providence health plans, integration with physicians and medical staff, and collaboration with other community agencies with similar goals. Providence's success is evident in the numbers: The smoking rate among providence members was at 16.7 percent last year,

well below state and national averages. In comparison, across the state in 1999, 21 percent of adult Oregonians smoked a mere 1 percent drop since 1994, according to statistics from the Oregon Health Division.

Nationally, about 25 percent of adult Americans smoked in 1998, a rate that hardly budged during the 1990s.

For those people who want to quit smoking, the program offers multiple resources, including affordable classes; the nicotine patch or Zyban medication is free with class participation or for those who don't want to attend a class. A stop smoking handbook and other educational materials



Dr. Charles Bentz, a physician at Providence St. Vincent, leads a successful stop smoking program.

County opens new health center in Rockwood

Multnomah County has opened a new Neighborhood Health Access Center in the Rockwood area.

The Rockwood Neighborhood Health Access Center, 1800 SE 181, is considered a model of innovation and collaboration by joining together with Wallace Medical Center and the National College of Naturopathic Medicine.

This partnership offers a unique combination of conventional, multilingual, and natural health services under one roof.

"Multnomah County is pleased to join the growing national movement that recognizes both traditional and alternative philosophies of medicine that so many families prefer," stated Commissioner Sharon Kelly. "Residents of the Rockwood neighborhood have had limited access to affordable health services. I am thrilled to open this center to all children and families in the area," continued Kelley.

According to Portland State University's Center for Population Research, vulnerable populations, such as senior citizens and non-English speaking immigrants, increased significantly over the last several decades. The new Rockwood Neighborhood Health Access center will offer a variety of health services in English, Spanish, and Russian, and will remain open several evenings a week.

The Rockwood Neighborhood Health Access Center is one of four access centers throughout the county. Designed as a direct point of access, the centers treat basic health needs by focusing on prevention, education and referrals. Some of the services that will be available include prenatal care, well-baby checkups, immunization, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutrition programs, and Oregon Health Plans screening and referrals.

Medical Marijuana Registry 'Working as Intended'

Oregon's medical marijuana program registered 594 patients in its first year of operation, and registrations have since increased to 1,068, according to public health officials at the state Department of Human Services.

"A number of states allow the medical use of marijuana, but Oregon was the first to implement a statewide registration system for patients," says Martin Wassermann, M.D., administrator of Health Division.

"Our first-year review shows the system is working as it was intended. A substantial number of qualified patients and their physicians are using it, and only few inquiries from enforcement officials regarding registered patients have occurred."

A review of the registry from May 1, 1999 through April 30, 2000, found that males accounted for 70 percent of the 594 patients who registered, the average age was 46, and patients ranged from 14 to 87 years old.

67 percent of the patients used medical marijuana to control severe and chronic pain.

Oregon voters passed the Medical Marijuana Act in 1998. It allows patients to possess and grow their own marijuana for medical purposes. Patients are exempt from prosecution under state and local laws as long as they follow provisions of the Act.

Physicians cannot prescribe marijuana as medication, but they can provide a statement that their patient has a qualifying debilitating medical condition and that

medical marijuana might alleviate their symptoms or disease. This allows the patient to request a registration card.

The Act directed the Health Division to set up a patient registry, which was implemented on May 1, 1999.

Before issuing the one-year identification card to the patient, the division verifies all registration information. The registration card fee is \$150, and the program is entirely supported by patient fees.

The Doctor's Corner Don't Let Grey Skies Get You Down

By John Oda, Ph. D.
for the Portland Observer



Dear Doctor John:

I have recently moved to Portland from California. I'm feeling very depressed because of the weather. What should I do?

Sarah of Gresham, OR

Dear Sarah,

The weather should not determine the way you feel. Most people put a label on the way they feel and call it depression.

It's only a label. What you say, think and feel, you become. It's time to take charge of your life, and when you feel depressed you move your body in a different way. When you move your body slow and think of all the negative thoughts, you can feel depressed.

You can change your focus and stop thinking of the weather to focus on the positive things that are going on in your life. When you change your body movement, it can change your mental, emotional and spiritual state.

Depression is only a state, so take control of your life, enjoy your stay.

Make your day outstanding!

Dear Doctor John,

I'm a high school student and my boyfriend is pressuring me to have sex. I love him a lot and don't want to lose him. What should I do?

Romaine of Chicago, Ill.

Dear Romaine,

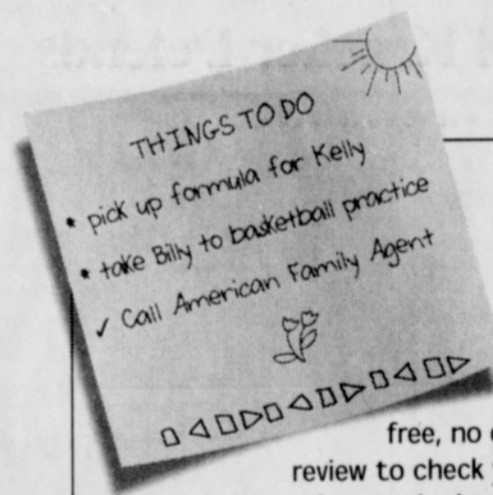
Thanks for writing. I feel you should only have sex when you are mentally and physically ready. It appears that you are not and are having second thoughts. Always listen to your gut feeling.

If your boyfriend truly loves you, he would never pressure you into having sex. In life, there is always a consequence. What would happen if you did relent to having sex? Can you handle being a mother, raising a child. Will your boyfriend be with you, or will he leave?

What if you caught some type of disease? Remember if you sleep with anyone, you have slept with everyone they have. How's your self-esteem, do you really love yourself? Maybe it's time to find yourself, and work on you.

Remember always think about the consequences in life by asking yourself "What is this going to cost me one year from now?" I hope you make the right decision. Speak with your parents or a school counselor. Make Your Fate!

John P. Oda, Ph.D., NLP is a Peak Performance Expert with 13 years experience in the mental health field and a regular featured writer for the Portland Observer. If you have any questions for The Doctor's Corner, email your question to news@PortlandObserver.com.



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