



# Health/Education

## Getting a Grip on Alcohol Problems

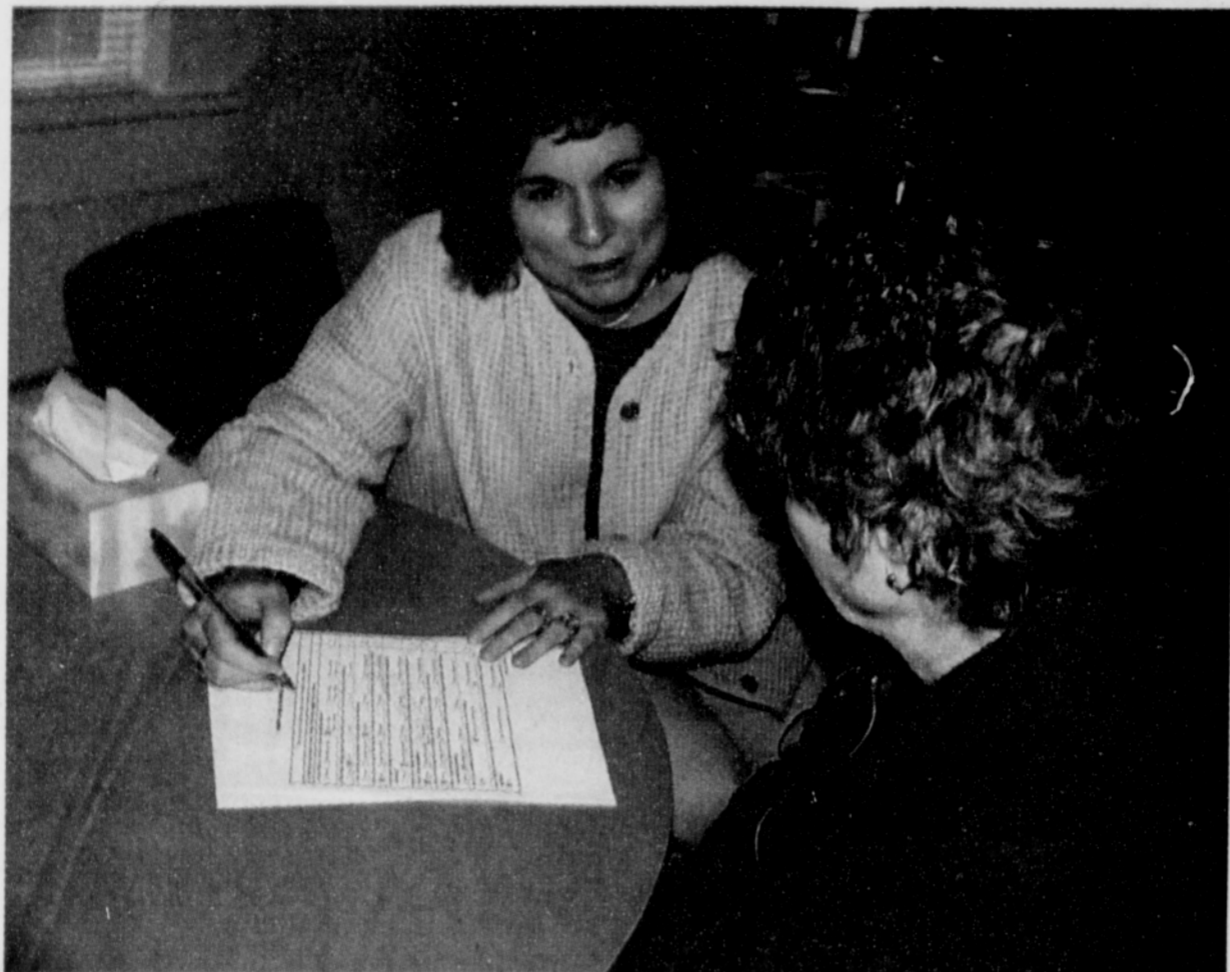
Area residents recently participated in National Alcohol Screening Day, an educational program that allows people to seek help with alcohol problems.

"Tens of thousands of Oregonians suffer from alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence," says Barbara Cimaglio, administrator of the Office of Drug and Alcohol Abuse of the Oregon Dept. of Human Services. "Thousands more drink at times or in ways that can place themselves or others at risk."

To help people recognize the signs of an alcohol problem and seek treatment, the department joined mental health workers in sponsoring the third annual National Alcohol Screening Day, April 5.

Participants learned about the full range of alcohol problems, completed a brief written screening to assess their alcohol use or that of someone else, and had the opportunity to talk privately with a substance abuse health professional.

Individuals who scored positive on the screening were given the names and telephone numbers of local treatment facilities. Cimaglio said that signs of alcohol problems include the following: Drinking to calm nerves, to forget worries or boost a sad mood; guilt about drinking; unsuccessful attempts to cut down/stop drinking; lying about or hiding drinking habits; causing harm to oneself or someone else as a result of drinking; needing to drink increasing amounts in order to



Barbara Stanbrow, a licensed mental health professional, recently donated her services at the Therapy Studio, 1016 N.W. 17th Ave., for free, anonymous screenings for alcohol problems as part of National Alcohol Screening Day.

(PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER)

achieve desired effect; feeling irritable, resentful or unreasonable when not drinking; and medical, social, family or financial problems caused by drinking.

To learn more you can log on the Internet at [www.AmericanMentalHealth.com](http://www.AmericanMentalHealth.com) and [www.OregonCounseling.Org](http://www.OregonCounseling.Org) or call 1-800-THERAPIST. This is a free refer-

ral service to get the names and credentials of qualified therapists who have skill and experience with your specific concerns.

## School Exclusion Could Have Been Worse

More than 6,800 children were sent home from Oregon schools and childcare facilities in February because they were missing required shots.

Although the number of exclusions was significantly higher than in previous years, it could have been much worse, according to Grant Higginson, M.D., acting administrator at the Oregon Health Division.

"This year 35,713 exclusion orders were issued and 19 percent of the children who received those letters ended up being sent home," Higginson said.

"This compares to an average of 14 percent to 18 percent of kids sent home over the past five years."

"This was the first year that new immunization requirements for seventh-graders went into effect. When you consider how many more students had to meet the requirement, we did an excellent job in getting children caught up on their shots so they could stay in school," Higginson said.

He credits the hard work of schools, parents, medical pro-

viders, the media and county health departments who came together to get children immunized.

New immunization rules require that students in seventh grade have a second dose of measles vaccine, a shot for chickenpox or a history of having chickenpox disease, and be up-to-date on their hepatitis B vaccine series. Children in kindergarten and children's facilities are now required to meet the chickenpox requirements.

"It isn't too soon for parents to start immunizing younger children with the additional required vaccines. We'll have another large group of children starting seventh grade in just a few months, so it's never too early," Higginson said.

Parents seeking immunizations for their children should contact their private provider, county health clinic or call Oregon SafeNet at 1-800-SAFENET, or 1-800-723-3638. In the Portland metro area, SafeNet can be reached at 503-988-5858.

## Students Get Better About Paying Loans

The percentage of Oregonian student borrowers defaulting on their loans dropped to an all-time low of 3.5 percent in 1999.

That's according to a report from the Oregon Stu-

dent Assistance Commission. The loan default rate was down from a record low of six percent in 1998.

Oregon's default rate peaked at 16 percent in 1990, and the national de-

fault rate hit 22 percent in 1992. Since then, Oregon's rate has steadily declined, reaching its lowest rate since the beginning of the federal student loan program.

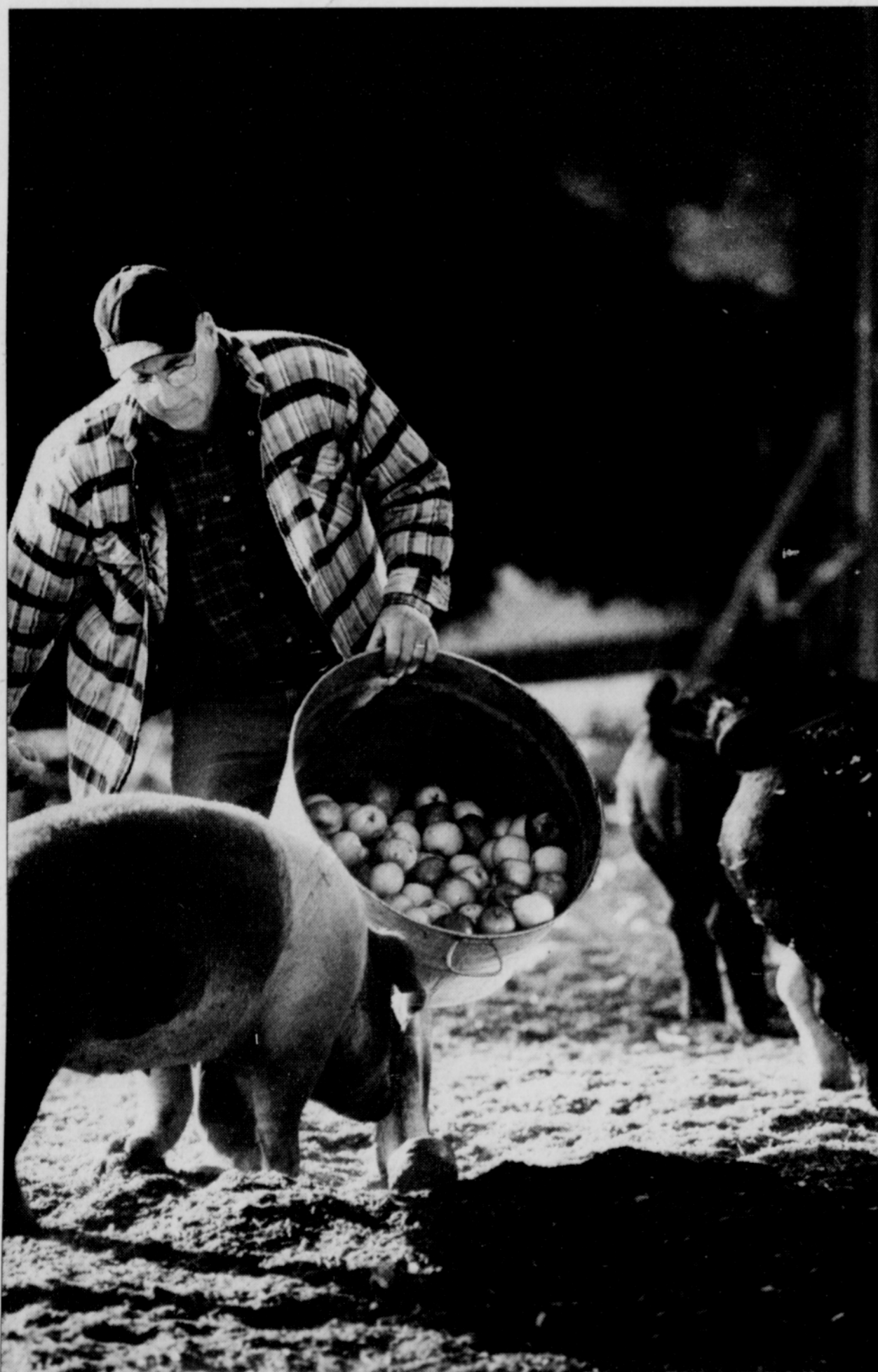
## NAACP Video Addresses HIV

The Portland NAACP Branch has available the HIV/AIDS video series, co-produced by the National NAACP Health Committee and DuPont Pharmaceuticals Company for training and educational purposes. The video titles

are: "House on Fire", "Sister's Keeper" and "Coming to Life". The three part series and a training guide are available upon request.

The NAACP Health Committee's mission, goals and

objectives is to address health concerns and work towards the improvement of health for all African Americans. For information and video requests, contact Crystal Busch, Health Committee Chair, 503-253-8556.



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