

Study Says Early Americans From Japan

(AP) - The first people to cross a land bridge from Asia and settle in the Americas may have been descendants of an ancient group who once lived in Japan, according to a new study.

Researchers examining and measuring the bone structure

of nearly 10,000 ancient human skulls collected from around the world say the first Americans were most closely related to the Jomon, a prehistoric people who lived in Japan thousands of years ago, and to a later group, the Ainu.

C. Loring Brace of the Mu-

seum of Anthropology at the University of Michigan said the skull measurements and other evidence suggest the members of the Jomon-Ainu group crossed what is now the Bering Straits and migrated throughout the Americas, from Alaska to the tip of South America.

"These were not the people who now live in Japan," said Brace, lead author of a study. "Those people migrated to Japan later from Asia, but you can still find traces of the Jomon among the Japanese."

Brace said the Jomon had some characteristics of Euro-

peans, along with Asian influences.

At the time of the first migration, 15,000 years ago, ice covered much of the northern world, causing the worldwide sea level to drop by hundreds of feet. The Bering Strait, which is not much deeper than 60

feet in most places, was not there. Instead, there was a dry land bridge from Alaska to Siberia.

Brace said characteristics of the first migrants are now clearly seen in many of the American Indian tribes, including the Blackfoot, Sioux and Cherokee.

Comment Sought on Health Plan Changes

New legislation will add up to 50,000 Oregonians to the Oregon Health Plan, but reduce coverage to pay for more people using the insurance plan.

As a result, community forums are scheduled statewide to learn how people would prefer benefits to change. Two public meetings will be held in the Portland area, starting with a session on Wednesday, Aug. 8 at Tuality Hospital in Hillsboro, following by a meeting Tuesday, Aug. 28 at the Adventist Medical Center, 10123 S.E. Market St. Both sessions will run from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m..

"We will ask people how they rank various benefits such as physician services, dental care and prescription drugs," said Dr. John Santa, administrator of the state Office for Oregon Health Plan Policy and Research, which staffs the state commission. "We also want to hear opinions about costs such as higher premiums, deductibles and co-pays."

The Oregon Health Plan provides coverage for people on public assistance. It also provides coverage for about 93,000 people who are not in a tradi-

tional Medicaid category or who earn too much for assistance but whose household incomes are still below the federal poverty level (\$1,179 a month for a

family of 3).

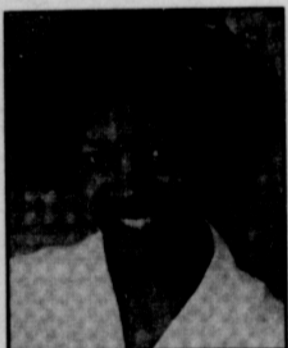
That expanded coverage, now in its eighth year, would grow to cover Oregonians with a household income of up to

185 percent of the federal poverty level (\$2,181 a month for a family of 3).

Expanding the number of people covered, which is ex-

pected by late 2002, will be financed by a combination of reducing the benefit package and seeking federal matching funds.

Abdullah Takes Job Promoting Health



Shareefah Abdullah


Southwest Washington Health District has hired Shareefah Abdullah of Vancouver as its first communications specialist.

A former media relations manager for the American Heart Association, Abdullah will handle internal and external communications.

"We're pleased to add Shareefah to the health district team," executive director Kay Koontz said.

Abdullah holds a law degree from Northwestern School of Law of Lewis and Clark College in Portland and a bachelor's degree in political science from the Univ. of Massachusetts at Boston. She wrote neighborhood and business news for the Colombian in Vancouver, before joining the American Heart Association.

She is a member of the Public Relations Society of America and former president of the Portland Association of Black Journalists.



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