

## Oregon Health Plan Expansion Supported

(AP) - The Legislature's interim budget committee has approved a proposal that could lead to a sizeable expansion of the Oregon Health Plan.

The proposal was unanimously endorsed in a phone meeting of the Emergency Board and now goes to the federal government. That's because changes in the plan are subject to approval of federal Medicaid officials.

Gov. John Kitzhaber and legislative leaders have been arguing over details of the plan. The governor's office says while Kitzhaber does not agree with all the details, he'll seek federal ap-

proval of the package so the plan can cover as many as 50-thousand more low-income people.

The changes would trim benefits and raise copayment charges to patients to cover more people without added cost to the state. Up to 25-thousand more working people could qualify for government subsidies to buy private health insurance offered by employers. And the income limit for health plan coverage would rise from 100 percent to 110 percent of the federal poverty level.

The current poverty level income for a family of three is \$15,000 a year.

## Sickle Cell Disease Confronted by Board

Area residents can get more information, testing and counseling about sickle cell disease by calling the Sickle Cell Board at 503-249-1366.

Sickle cell disease is a term used to characterize a group of inherited blood disorders for which hemoglobin S is the dominant hemoglobin, afflicting pain and frequent hospitalizations to its victims.

Sickle cell is found throughout the world and affects primarily

Afro-Americans, but frequents African/Hispanic-Caribbean, South American and Greek populations.

This silent predator can cause pain as early as 4-6 months of age, but can be treated if diagnosed early. Symptoms are jaundiced eyes, sudden onset of pain in part of the body, painful swelling of the hands or feet, fever, difficulty berating, low hemoglobin and hematuria, pallor and unwanted erection in males.



*Entrepreneur on a Mission*

Linda Hoof of Annie Mae's Unique Gifts and Collectibles is a local entrepreneur on a mission during Thursday's Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs tradeshow at the Oregon Convention Center. A business incubator workshop and contractors' meeting was also held in conjunction with the event.

## Insurance Premium Costs Soar

(AP) — Health care subscribers in Oregon and southwest Washington are having more trouble paying their premiums as insurers hike up costs to stabilize their business.

Most health insurers last year increased premiums more steeply than the increase in payouts for medical care. On a per-member basis, the average monthly premium went up 12 percent, compared with an 8 percent increase in medical spending, according to a new analysis.

Benefit consultants and industry analysts say employers and health plans are looking for ways to shift more health costs to workers, hoping they will curtail their use

of services because of the increase.

"January 2003 is going to bring the mother-of-all-cost-shifting to employees," predicts Ian Morrison, a health care industry consultant in Menlo Park, Calif.

Nationwide, 40 percent of large companies, those with 500 or more workers, said they will require employees to pay a higher percentage of costs this year, according to the latest survey by Mercer, the benefits consulting firm, which gathered responses last year from 2,800 large and small employers.

More than a third of large companies said they will raise workers' out-of-pocket expenses, such as co-payments for doctor visits and hospital care.

## Second Slave Reparations Lawsuit Filed

(AP) — An insurance company, a railroad and a bank are the latest defendants named in a lawsuit that seeks slave reparations.

A New Jersey man has filed suit against the three companies asserting that they benefited from slave labor.

Richard E. Barber, Jr., a graduate of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, said his ancestors lived in Trenton, N.J., where Norfolk Southern Railroad, New York Life Insurance and private bank Brown Brothers Harriman and Company in New York all profited from their unpaid service.

His is the second suit in as many months arguing that descendants of African slaves

should receive compensation as a consequence of the slave labor trade. The first suit, in which a woman filed a \$1.4 trillion claim against Aetna, Fleet Boston, and CSX Railroad, among others, says the firms profited from their ties to slave labor, including through claims on life insurance policies for slaves in their employ.

Barber, a resident of Somerset, asserts that there is no time limit on justice for crimes against humanity. His lawyers say their client and up to 37 million others whose ancestors were slaves lag behind whites as a result of the earlier era of discrimination.

Blacks "lag behind whites according to every social yardstick: literacy, life expectancy, income and education," the lawsuit said.

Advertise with diversity

in

The Portland Observer

call 503.288.0033

or email:  
ads@portlandobserver.com

**Annie Mae's Unique Gifts & Collectibles**  
Ethnic Clothing, Porcelain Dolls, Figurines, and Jewelry

Linda R Hoof  
Owner/Manager

2631 N.E. Alberta Street  
Portland, Oregon 97211

Business: 503.528.2933  
Cell: 503.309.4637  
Fax: 503.493.1483

E-Mail: lchoof@qwest.net

**Ms. Mode's second grade class will host its Fourth Annual Mothers Day Tea at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School on Friday, May 10th in Room 140D.**

**Roses are red  
Violets are blue;  
May this day bring love  
And Happiness to you.**

Imagine this: You're proud of the children you raised. Your grandkids are talented and beautiful, too. The reality of retirement has finally arrived and it's even better than the fantasy.

*You* have family behind you.

You couldn't have done it without family behind you. American Family Mutual Insurance. When it comes to your future, over 70 years in the insurance business is experience you can trust. With over six million policies in an operating area of 14 states and a consistent rating of A+ (Superior) from insurance rating authority A.M.

Best, we've got the kind of stability that invites you to relax. And isn't that precisely what you had in mind? So, call today and talk to a helpful, friendly agent. Then dive right in. We'll be close behind you.



**AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE**  
AUTO HOME BUSINESS HEALTH LIFE Equal Housing INSURER

All Your Protection Under One Roof.

American Family Mutual Insurance Company and its Subsidiaries, Madison, WI 53783-0001 www.amfam.com