

HEALTH

Dental Care Needs for HIV Patients on the Rise

Russell Street Clinic sees more clients

People with HIV now are living longer and the number of patients treated at the North Russell Street Dental Clinic continues to grow. The clinic, part of the Oregon Health and Science University School of Dentistry, is seeing 200 patients with HIV a month - doubling what it handled three years ago.

The 30-year-old clinic provides an essential service to Oregonians, said Dr. David Rosenstein, professor emeritus of community dentistry, School of Dentistry, and director and founder of the Russell Street Clinic.

"In the early 1980s when the AIDS epidemic reached Portland - about five years after the Russell Street Clinic opened its doors - we were the first and only providers of dental care to HIV-positive patients," said Rosenstein. "We continue to be the main source of dental care to HIV-positive folks in the Portland area."

The clinic, located at 214 N. Russell St. is Oregon's only Title I provider under the Ryan White Care Act passed in 1990. It provides about \$60,000 worth of HIV ser-

vices each month.

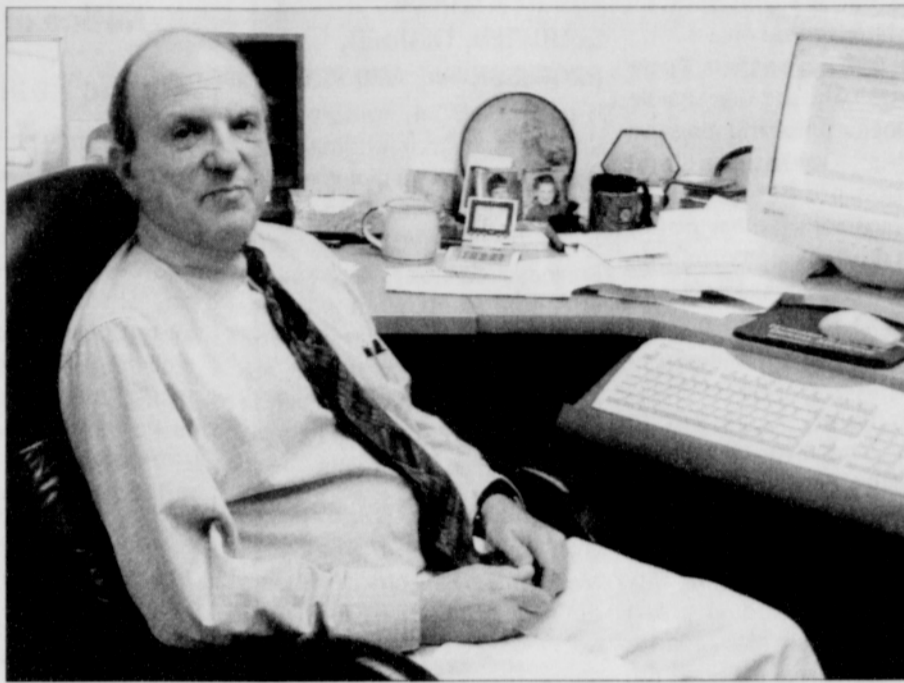
Longtime patient Jack Cox, 65, can remember the days when most dentists didn't want to treat HIV patients and access to care was extremely difficult.

"In the early days of HIV and AIDS, people drove up to the Russell Street Clinic from way south - Medford, Coos Bay, Eugene - just to have their teeth cleaned," said Cox, who has been coming to Russell Street for 16 years. "David Rosenstein is a real hero to the HIV community."

Individuals with HIV have more dental needs than the average person, said Rosenstein, because their immune systems are compromised, and the antiretroviral drugs they take decrease salivation, increasing the incidence of tooth decay and necessitating more frequent cleanings.

Cox visits the Russell Street Clinic at least three times a year for cleanings and more if additional oral health care like fillings or root canals is needed.

"The dentists at Russell Street happen



Dr. David Rosenstein is the founder of the North Russell Street Dental Clinic. to be the best around," Cox said. "They don't take shortcuts. They take the view that poor people deserve the same health care as rich people."

"I think the reason people keep going to Russell Street is because of the quality

of care," added Cox. "Dr. Rosenstein and the other dentists there make it clear that if you take care of the 'easier' health stuff like your teeth, that your immune system has a much better chance of fighting more serious infections."

Free HIV Tests Offered Monday

As part of National HIV Testing Day, Planned Parenthood will be offering free HIV tests on Monday, June 27 to anyone who visits one of its health centers, including clinics in northeast Portland, southeast Portland, Beaverton and Gresham.

Patients can get directions by visiting www.ppcw.org or by calling 8000 230-PLAN.

National HIV Testing Day was launched by the National Association of People with AIDS as a way to reach millions of those at risk with a simple message: "Take the Test, Take Control."

HIV counseling and testing enables people with HIV to take steps to protect their own health and that of their partners, and helps people who test negative get the information they need to stay uninfected.

Medical Marijuana Cards Issued Again

State permit won't trump federal law

Oregon's medical marijuana program has resumed issuing registration cards to qualified patients as a result of Attorney General Hardy Myers' opinion that a June 13 U.S. Supreme Court ruling against medical marijuana does not invalidate the state program.

However, officials said Oregon law "neither protects marijuana plants from seizure nor individuals from prosecution if the federal government chooses

to take action against patients or caregivers under the federal Controlled Substances Act."

The state law protects local residents using medical marijuana from state prosecution, but it does not protect them from federal prosecution, officials said.

More than 10,000 qualified patients now have registration cards through the state program, one of 11 in the nation. Patients qualify for the program if a state-licensed physician stipulates that they suffer from one of nine conditions such as cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, severe pain, or persistent muscle spasms, and that the patient may benefit from the use of medical marijuana.

Low Income Health Clinic Opens in Southwest

Newest member of county coalition

A new health clinic has opened to help low income and uninsured patients in southwest Portland.

The Southwest Community Health Center is located in the Multnomah Art Center, Multnomah Village, 7688 S.W. Capitol Hwy.

Oregon Health & Science University family medicine physicians, residents and students, as well as other professional community volunteers, provide the medical care. Community volunteers help to

staff the clinic and provide office support.

The new health center offers quality, basic health services focusing on acute health problems. Patients needing specialized care will be referred to other health care professionals.

The health center is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 8 p.m. In order to provide services, a sliding-scale fee based on income is required of patients. Besides providing health care, volunteers will

We believe health care is a right - not a privilege.

- Samira Godil, health center director

help patients with Oregon Health Plan eligibility screening and in filling out the OHP applications.

"We believe health care is a right - not a privilege. There is so little access to health care for the unin-

sured west side of Portland, and there is so much demand," said Samira Godil, health center executive director, who was instrumental in creating this community clinic.

Southwest Community Health Center is a new member of the Multnomah County Coalition of Community Health Centers and the only safety net clinic for low-income and uninsured people in outer southwest Portland. The governing board of directors includes clinicians, public health, social service and child advocacy professionals.

Heart Drug Recommended for African Americans

(AP) - With heart disease being a common occurrence among the African American community, a drug targeted specifically for black Americans with heart problems may become the first drug in the U.S. marketed to a specific racial group.

The Food and Drug Administration's cardiovascular drug advisory panel voted 9-0 on Thurs-

day in favor of allowing sales of the heart failure medication BiDil after a clinical trial in black Americans found that those using it did better than those who did not.

In heart failure, the heart is too weak to beat effectively and fluid builds up in the lungs. As many as half of all victims die within five years. The usual treatment is with drugs called ACE

inhibitors, but research has indicated they do not work as well in blacks as in whites.

BiDil is a combination of two drugs: hydralazine, which eases blood pressure, and isosorbate dinitrate, which is used for heart pain. The combination also boosts the amounts of nitric oxide in the blood, a substance that is found in lower levels in blacks.

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