

Many Troubled by Medicare Part D

Senior service providers help out

BY KHAYA DARKO
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D'Norgia Price, the director of adult and senior services for the Urban League of Portland, and her team at the Multicultural Senior Center on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, is assisting seniors in acquiring a better understanding of the prescription drug plans under Medicare Part D.

According to Price, the new program has proved complex even for an average adult citizen. Throw in the difficulties of seniors who cannot read or suffer from poor eyesight and it becomes very difficult for many to know what is going on, even when special services are offered.

Price said some local seniors had trouble getting the medicine



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Lyda Overton (left) and Lorraine Thompson discuss the difficulties of knowing what the future holds with new prescription drug plans under Medicare Part D.

they needed after the drug program started on Jan. 1, however with the partnership between Multnomah County, the Urban League, as well as Loaves & Fishes, local senior service providers are making a difference.

Oregon and at least two dozen other states have also taken emergency action to pay pharmacies when low-income people are denied coverage from insurers under Medicare Part D.

Lyda Overton, a local senior citizen, said she currently is forced to pay for her medication out of pocket since she hasn't met the deductible fees required. She hopes her medication next month will be more reasonable in price.

Lorraine Thompson, another local resident, said she is uncertain of what the future holds for her health and prescription drug benefits, because she does not turn 65 until Dec 3.

Supreme Court Justice Confirmed



Samuel Alito Jr.

Samuel Anthony Alito Jr. was sworn in as the nation's 110th Supreme Court justice on Tuesday after being confirmed by the Senate in one of the most partisan victories in modern history.

Alito was sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts in a private ceremony at the Supreme Court building across from the Capitol. The 55-year-old New Jersey jurist took both the constitutional and judicial oaths so

he can immediately participate in court decisions. Alito's swearing-in came only hours after the Senate voted 58-42 to confirm him, despite the objections of most Democrats, the NAACP and civil rights organizations.

Many of the complaints about President Bush's pick for the high court were that he would erode civil rights protections and be beholden to conservatives.

"I am who I am. I'm my own person. And I'm not like any other justice on the Supreme Court now or anybody else who served on the Supreme Court in the past," Alito said at his confirmation hearing.

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Six Dead in Post Office Shooting

Female postal worker goes on rampage

A former postal worker who had been put on medical leave for psychological problems shot five people to death at a huge mail-processing center in Santa Barbara, Calif. and then killed herself in what was believed to be the nation's deadliest workplace shooting ever carried out by a woman.

The attack Monday night was also the biggest bloodbath at a U.S. postal installation since a massacre 20 years ago helped give rise to the term "going postal."

Investigators would not release the killer's name or discuss a motive for the attack.

The rampage - the nation's first deadly postal shooting in nearly eight years - sent employees running from the Southern California complex and prompted authorities to warn nearby residents to stay indoors as they searched for the killer.

The 44-year-old woman had not worked at the plant for more than two years but still managed to get inside the fenced and guarded facility.

She drove through a gate by following closely

behind another car, and then got in the front door by taking an employee's electronic identification badge at gunpoint, authorities said. She opened fire with a 9 mm handgun, reloading at least once during the rampage, Santa Barbara County Sheriff Jim Anderson said.

As the shooting began, some of the 80 or so workers streamed out of the building. Some ran to a firehouse.

"I was dumping mail on a belt when the gunshots suddenly 'boom, boom, boom, boom!'" said postal worker Alger Busante, 56. He rushed out of the building. "It is really very shocking. This is a peaceful place," Busante said.

Postal employee Charles Kronick told KEY-TV in Santa Barbara that he was inside the building when he heard shots. "I heard something that sounded like a pop, and then I heard a couple seconds later, another pop, pop, pop," Kronick said. Kronick said his boss came running over and told him to get out of the building, and "we all hightailed it out real quick."



Anthony Barboza, New York City, 1974

life style

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Throughout February, in celebration of Black History Month, we will showcase images by the Kamoinge photographers at selected Nordstrom stores, and on our Web site at nordstrom.com. It is with great pride we shed light on the work generated by members of Kamoinge, and honor the style, spirit and pride of the African-American experience, captured so eloquently by this innovative group of artists.

Boxed sets of 20 note cards featuring images from the exhibit will be available in Customer Service at Nordstrom stores hosting the exhibit. The cost is 8.00. Quantities are limited.

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