

# Shining a Light on HIV

## Vaccine Research Funded

continued ▲ from Front

### Not a safe community

Another factor for the disparity of African Americans being at risk of HIV is the often cited refusal of many people to disclose their sexual orientation. CDC reports show a significant number of African American men who have sex with men identify themselves as heterosexual instead of gay or bisexual.

"They don't identify with gay culture, which they see as white and effeminate," said Phil Wilson, executive director of the Black AIDS Institute in Los Angeles, in an article for the San Francisco Chronicle.

"And when they do venture into gay communities like San Francisco's, which are predominantly white, they feel unwelcome, according to several studies of gay men of color," he said.

The CDC is examining homophobia in the black community and the phenomenon of being on the "down low," meaning men having unmentioned sex with men, then spreading the disease to black women.

The Center says most black women are infected through heterosexual contact, but many don't know how their partners were infected.

The down low phenomenon is complex, Moch said, because it could erroneously place blame on gay black men for spreading the disease.

"I think the down low discussion is one the black community needs to have," he said. "We get bits of sensationalism, but we haven't had hard-core discussions of understanding these factors."

Separating stereotypes, both racial and sexual, from HIV/AIDS is what Brother to Brother is about. Moch says the organization creates a space for the black community to be with itself.

### Responding in Portland

Portland's statistics aren't nearly as alarming as larger cities like Chicago and San Francisco, where African Americans are experiencing epidemics that could devastate the community. Moch said even though there are significant gaps in services for people of color in Portland, our small size could be conducive to disseminating prevention information.



Daryl Moch is executive director of Brother to Brother, an organization fighting HIV and AIDS in the African American community.

sources and funds," Moch said.

Leaders in the fight against HIV are asking for a commitment from every part of the community, including parents and faith leaders.

Brother to Brother has already formed partnerships with Multnomah County, and was the first black, gay organization to be awarded a contract with the county, which they received in March. The group has partnerships with the Cascade Aids Project and Partnership Project, Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG), the African American Alliance, and many others.

They also work with the faith community.

"The black church has a tremendous responsibility because of their clout in community," Moch said. "As it becomes more apparent that we have to do something, more ministers are impacted."

He praised Rev. Renee Ward and Rev. John Garlington III, two local church leaders, for bringing the issue to the doors of the church.

"The numbers are small right now," he said. "With a concerted effort we could begin to eliminate the problem."

But reaching out to Portlanders with HIV/AIDS who fall through the cracks is sometimes a challenge.

"It's an arduous task, given our re-

New support by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will accelerate the pace of HIV vaccine development at Portland's Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute and the Oregon National Primate Research Center at Oregon Health & Science University.

The foundation announced 16 grants last week totaling \$287 million to fund an international team of scientists studying HIV.

Eleven of the grants will pay for highly collaborative vaccine research, including research in Portland. The other five grants will fund five central facilities to evaluate the immune responses of the vaccines developed through the research group.

While the exact total is not known, new funding for the Portland projects will likely exceed \$10 million.

## Weekend Prostate Screenings Free at Mobile Testing Center

Almost every week, a Portland man will die from prostate cancer in a state with the second lowest prostate cancer screening rate in the country. Only 42 percent of Oregonians over 50 get tested for the disease.

But there is hope through early detection and education. That's why the National Prostate Cancer Coalition has teamed up with the Lance Armstrong Foundation and Fred Meyer to bring free testing to Portland this

weekend. Free screenings onboard the "Drive Against Prostate Cancer" RV will be held Saturday, July 29 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Fred Meyer Gateway store, 1111 N.E. 102 Ave. and Sun-

day, Sunday, July 30 from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Portland Meadows, 1001 N. Schmeer Rd. On board, men are treated to sports on a large flat screen TV, free snacks and invited to surf the web while they

wait. Local licensed physicians conduct a full screening for prostate cancer. Each test takes about 10 minutes and patients will receive results in the mail in less than a week.

## A Win for the Environment

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"City Council didn't do their homework as far as all the ramifications," said Steve O'Toole, executive director of Oregon Petroleum Association. "On the biodiesel side, we're nowhere close to having production within Oregon. Everybody has the same goal, but what we're really upset about is they're going ahead with this with about three week's notice."

However, the requirements win praise from the Oregon Environmental Commission which claims that a shortage of biodiesel isn't likely.

Kevin Consadine, program director for Sustainable Economy, said the three biodiesel producers currently serving the metro area, Salem-based SeQuential Fuels and Portland-based producers StarOilco and Carson Oil, are large distributors, and SeQuential is expected to open a Portland plant soon. Also, a consortium of biofuel and alternative fuel providers is forming to work with the Northwest Environmental Business Council.

"Several folks are looking to locate now," Consadine said. "Having new standards makes it easier for them, knowing they have a viable, stable market."

Michael Armstrong, manager of the city's Office of Sustainable Development, said to expect even

more providers in the city by next summer.

It's unclear whether biofuels will be more expensive than petroleum by next summer; as of April, according to the Oregon Biofuels Network, SeQuential sold a blend of 99 percent biofuel (B99) for roughly \$3.10 per gallon.

But Commissioner Randy Leonard, who spearheaded the new mandate, stated that besides reducing our gas emissions, the biofuel initiative would positively affect job growth and investment in biofuel production.

"Biodiesel has significant advantages, in terms that you're investing money into in-state companies," Consadine said. "We're hoping to put together an incentive packet and pass legislation at the state level."

To implement the requirements, City Council is forming a task force from the fuel industry, biodiesel industry, environmental groups and Oregon grain growers. The committee is set to report to the council in four months. Enforcement includes a written notice and a fine of up to \$5,000 for the first violation, and up to \$10,000 for the second violation. Bureau of Sustainable Development director Susan Anderson will assess the mandate, adjusting the minimum requirements if necessary.

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