

Mental Illness Training Required for Police

Police officers in Oregon will get training to spot mental illness and learn the skills necessary to tap down the potential for violence thanks to a new law promoted by State Sen. Avel Gordly, an African-American leader from Portland. Gov. Ted Kulongoski signed the bill into law last month.

Co-sponsored by Reps. John Lim and Andy Olson, the legislation requires the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to include at least 24 hours of training on mental illness for police officers



Sen. Avel Gordly

ers in the state.

"This is a good bill," said Rep. Lim on the House floor, "This subject became dear to my heart as I followed the story of James Chasse last October."

Chasse died after a confrontation with Portland police last year. It was later reported that Chasse suffered from schizophrenia.

"I do not want to put blame on any law enforcement officer," said Lim, "I just want to prevent losing more lives as incidences of mental illness increase."

According to a study released by the U.S. Justice Department, 56 percent of jail inmates in state prisons and 64 percent of inmates across the country reported mental health problems within the past year.

Portland Police Bureau reports that the number of calls involving people suffering from mental illness is growing. In 2005, there were 2,078 calls, up from 1,999 in 2004 and 1,907 in 2003.

"This mandatory training is a major advancement in the administration of justice in the State of Oregon," said Gordly.

Search for Suspect in Holgate Robbery

The Portland Police Bureau, in cooperation with Crime Stoppers, is asking for your help identifying a robbery suspect caught on tape.

On June 5, 2007, at 11:36 p.m., a lone female robbed the Holgate Gas and Grocery located at 4525 Southeast 28th Avenue. The suspect entered the store, made small talk with the clerk and then left. She returned a short time later, and as she talked on her cell phone walked to the counter, raised her shirt and exposed a gun tucked in her waistband. The suspect fled the store on foot, northbound across Holgate on Southeast 27th Avenue. She may be associated with a black SUV that was seen in the area prior to the robbery.

The suspect is described as a black female, approximately 20 years old, 5'5" tall with a stocky build. In the surveillance video, the suspect is wearing a black hooded



sweatshirt with a distinctive logo that could possibly be a backwards "F," which may be associated with the skater clothing brand "Famous."

The suspect should be considered armed and dangerous.

Crime Stoppers is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information, reported to Crime

Stoppers, that leads to an arrest in this case, or any unsolved felony, and you remain anonymous. Call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-HELP (4357).

Police Provide Remedy for Disability Issues

Voluntary program helps communication

The Portland Police Bureau has a voluntary program for people with developmental or mental health disabilities, providing officers with vital information about individuals' disability should police contact be-

come necessary.

The information gives officers an additional resource to help them communicate.

In 1996, the Police Bureau in partnership with the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee created the Disability Accommodation Registry (DAR). Individuals, or their legal guardians, can participate in this voluntary program by completing a DAR registration form.

Registration in the DAR is encouraged for citizens who have severe developmental disabilities, brain injuries, some types of mental illness and any other condition where they might not be able to communicate with an officer if they become lost or involved in a police action.

DAR not only provides a way for officers to communicate with those who may be unable to do so in times of crisis, it is also helpful

in making officers aware of any behavioral issues that may exist. People with Alzheimer's disease or mental health issues, who are significantly impaired, are also using the DAR.

For more information about the DAR or to obtain a registration form, visit www.portlandpolicebureau.com or contact the Portland Police Bureau's Strategic Services Division at 503-823-0283.

Law Widens Access to Birth Control

A new Oregon law requires employee health insurance plans to provide prescription drug coverage of birth control and emergency contraception, and to be made available by hospital emergency rooms to victims of sexual assault.

"This fight is fundamentally about women being able to make the best health care decisions for themselves and their families," said Gov. Ted Kulongoski.

The law, which will go into effect Jan. 1, means health insurance plans would be obligated to offer the same level of coverage for birth control as they do for other prescription drugs.

Nearly half of all indemnity health insurance plans provide no coverage for prescription birth control - even when there is coverage for other medications. Women on av-



The emergency contraceptive Plan B.

erage spend \$573 out-of-pocket each year on birth control.

In addition, the new law requires hospital emergency rooms in Oregon to offer women who have been victims of sexual assault, or that they believe have been a victim of sexual assault, information about and ac-

cess to emergency contraception.

Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy if administered within 72 hours of the assault. It contains the same hormones as those used in common birth control pills, though at different dosage levels.

City Hall Makes Restrooms Available

Restrooms located on the first floor of City Hall will soon be open overnight as part of the Mayor's Street Access for Everyone Initiative to increase downtown livability.

The 24-hour access is expected to be in place by Aug. 2.

Currently, City Hall restrooms are open to the public from 7 a.m. to

6 p.m. The additional hours will increase the City's public restroom capacity during hours when no other public restrooms are available.

The SAFE Initiative was launched last year to make Portland's streets open and accessible for all members of the community.

The plan includes providing day shelters for the homeless during hours when most shelters are closed, increasing the number of benches, opening public restrooms and enacting a sidewalk obstruction ordinance that prohibits sitting or lying on sidewalks in the downtown and Lloyd District during business hours.

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