

HEALTH MATTERS

Kids Lose Coverage with Parents

When parents lose their health care coverage, their children can also become uninsured, a state-wide survey of Oregon families has found.

Researchers at Oregon Health & Science University and the Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research conducted the survey to see what happened to children after the 2003 cutbacks in the Oregon Health Plan.

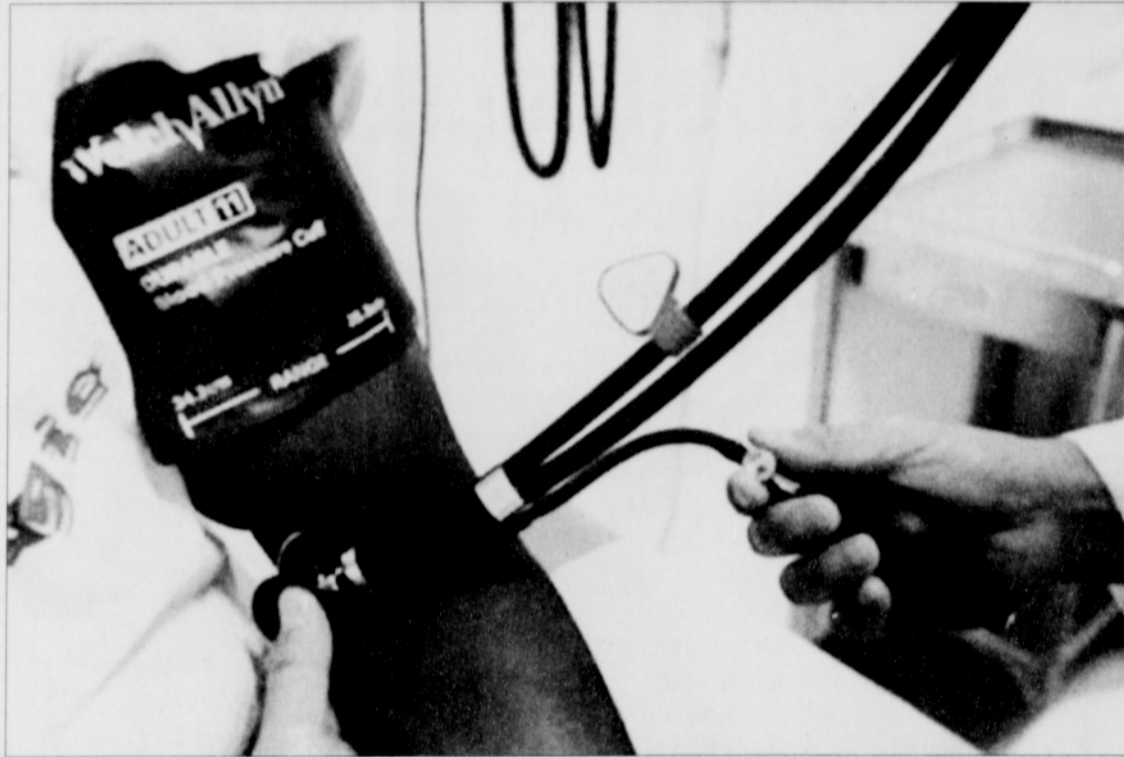
The study, published recently in the online edition of Health Services Research, found that in 2003, Oregon cut coverage for adults in its Medicaid program, called the Oregon Health Plan. Shortly after the cutbacks, more than 50,000 low-income adults lost their coverage.

High Blood Pressure, Alzheimer's Linked

(AP) — Having high blood pressure reduces blood flow in the brains of Alzheimer's patients, making them more vulnerable to the effects of the disease, according to a new study.

Researchers used a magnetic resonance imaging technique to measure blood flow in the brains of 68 older adults. They found cerebral blood flow was substantially decreased in all patients with high blood pressure and was the lowest in Alzheimer's patients with high blood pressure.

"What we think may be happening is hypertension reflects an extra hit to the brain," said Cyrus Raji of the University of



Pittsburgh, who led the study.

About 50 million Americans have hypertension, in which the blood circulates through the arteries with too much force, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. The condition increases the risk for heart attack, stroke and aneurysm.

"This study demonstrates that good vascular health is also good for the brain," said Oscar Lopez of the University of Pittsburgh, who also worked on the study.

A doctor checks the blood pressure of a patient at a Los Angeles clinic.

HEALTH WATCH

Mammography Screening -- Early detection is a key factor in the prevention of breast cancer. Call 503-251-6137 to schedule your high-tech, soft-touch mammogram.

Treatment Options for Joint and Arthritis Pain -- Thursday, Dec. 20, from 6:30-8 p.m., learn about treatment options for degenerative joint disease, including total hip- or knee-replacement surgery, exercise and medication regimes. Call 503-692-2411 to register for this free class.

Maternity Water Workout -- Helping new moms regain muscle tone, strength and flexibility, all in the support and freedom of the water. Call 503-256-4000 for more information.

CPR-Initial Course for Healthcare Providers -- Wednesday, Dec. 12, from 6 to 11 p.m., this course is for participants completing the course will receive a certification card for healthcare professionals; \$60 fee. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Newborn Care -- Tuesday, Dec. 18, from 6 to 9 p.m., learn what to expect and how to care for your new baby; \$45 fee per couple. To register, call 503-256-4000.

Tenderfoot Care -- Treat your feet with a soak, nail trim, buffing and massage from a licensed nurse at one of six clinics or at your home. Call 503-251-6303 for more information.

Active Living Every Day -- Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 15, the "evidence-based" national 20-week program changing America's outlook on physical activity (not an exercise class) will spark a new way of thinking. To register, call 503-241-0359.

Nutritional Seminars -- New Seasons Market is presenting a series of nutritional seminars at various store locations along with a nutritional help line. For more information, email aksthenutritionist@newseasonsmarket.com.

Maternity Orientation -- Thursdays, Dec. 6, and Dec. 20, this free class will help to familiarize expectant parents with the Maternity Unit and answer any question they may have. For more information, call 503-574-6595.

Senior Aerobics -- A low-impact workout geared specifically toward seniors. Call 503-449-0783 for current schedule.

Vegetarian Starter Kit -- Healthy vegetarian eating made easier with informational resources, samples, coupons and delicious recipes. Kits are \$7.50 each (includes shipping). To order, call 503-256-4000.

Cardiac-Rehab Exercise Classes -- A medically supervised exercise program for people dealing with heart conditions. For more information, call 503-251-6260.

Osteoporosis Screening -- An ultrasound bone density screening with personalized education; fee \$30. To schedule an appointment, call 503-261-6611.

Leg Alert Screening -- Check for peripheral arterial disease with this safe, simple screening using ankle and arm blood pressure. The fee is \$40. To schedule an appointment, call 503-251-6137.

Stroke Alert Screening -- Check your carotid arteries with a painless ultrasound to assess your risk; fee \$40. To schedule a screening, call 503-251-6137.

Parenting Classes -- Newborns don't come with instruction manuals but parents and parents-to-be can learn about a variety of topics from pain and childbirth to breastfeeding to infant CPR and much more. For a schedule of events, call 503-574-6595 or visit: providence.org/classes.

Cancer Resource Center -- Providence St. Vincent Medical Center and the American Red Cross have joined forces to create the first in-hospital resource center providing books, printed material, computer access and more for individuals and families dealing with cancer. The center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Free Body Basics -- This physician-recommended class is appropriate for all ages and health conditions. Plan to attend this one-session class and learn the simple guidelines for safe exercises, including stretching. Call 503-256-4000 to register.

Bereavement Support -- A bereavement support group meets each second and fourth Tuesday, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. To learn more, call 503-251-6192, extension 5670.

Better Breathers -- An asthma educational support group meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. at Adventist Medical Center. For more information, call 503-251-6830.

Chronic Pain Support Group -- meets the first Wednesday at 4 to 5:30 p.m. and the third Wednesday of each month, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 503-256-4000.

Heart Talk Support Group -- meets on the second Monday of each month; from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, call 503-251-6260.

Smoke-Free Support Group -- meets every Monday, 7 to 8 p.m. For more information, call 503-256-4000.

Health Officials Promote Vaccines

Children need flu defense too

Oregon public-health officials this week are renewing their push to get both adults and children vaccinated against influenza.

"A flu shot or nasal spray is an easy way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the misery of flu," said Lorraine Duncan, immunization manager in the Oregon Department of Human Services. "It prevents you from infecting others, which is important if

you have close contact with people for whom the flu might be especially dangerous such as the elderly, people with a chronic illness, and infants or young children."

Oregon received a record number of 1.25 million doses of flu vaccine this fall.

"There is plenty of vaccine available, and influenza season typically doesn't peak until February," Duncan said. "Getting vaccinated in November or December and even beyond will offer protection from the flu."

Duncan stressed that it's important for children and those

who have close contact with them to get vaccinated. Each year, more than 20,000 children under age 5 nationally are hospitalized as a result of influenza.

The nasal-spray vaccine FluMist is a good alternative to the injectable vaccine for anyone who is healthy and between ages of 2 and 49.

Influenza is characterized by abrupt onset of high fever, headache, sore throat, cough and muscle aches. Unlike other common respiratory illnesses, it is associated with extreme fatigue and loss of appetite lasting several days.

Sexual Diseases Set Record

(AP) — More than 1 million cases of chlamydia were reported in the United States last year — the most ever reported for a sexually transmitted disease, federal health officials said Tuesday.

Officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said they think better and more intensive screening accounts for much of the increase, but added that chlamydia was not the only sexually

transmitted disease on the rise.

Gonorrhea rates are jumping again after hitting a record low, and an increasing number of cases are caused by a "superbug" version that is much more resistant to common antibiotics.

Syphilis is rising, too. The rate of congenital syphilis — which can deform or kill babies — rose for the first time in 15 years.

"Hopefully we will not see

this turn into a trend," said Dr. Khalil Ghanem, an infectious diseases specialist at Johns Hopkins University's School of Medicine.

The CDC releases a report each year on chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, three diseases caused by sexually transmitted bacteria.

Chlamydia is the most common. Nearly 1,031,000 cases were reported last year, up from 976,000 the year before.

Medicare Drug Part D Explained

Staff and volunteers from the Multnomah County Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program will conduct neighborhood enrollment events to help individuals compare Medicare Part D prescription drug plans.

The annual enrollment period began Nov. 15 and continues through Dec. 31.

People with Medicare are encouraged to find a plan that fits their needs, but it takes re-

search to sort through the options.

"It's wise to assume your plan has changed, and read it carefully to compare costs," says Janet Bowman, Multnomah County SHIBA coordinator. "Before choosing a different plan, find out: will my doctor accept it? Will it cover what I need? Get the answers before you sign up."

People who have questions may call their plan or 1-800-

MEDICARE.

To make an appointment at one of the following enrollment events, contact Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services Helpline at 503-988-3648: Thursday, Nov. 29 at the Midland Library, Friday, Nov. 30 at the Hollywood Library, Dec. 6 at the St. Johns Library, Dec. 13 at the Midland Library, Dec. 14 at the Hollywood Library and Dec. 17 at the Gresham Library.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

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Q: Could my golf swing hurt my back?

A: People who exercise regularly and perform stretching and strengthening exercise are less likely to injure their backs. Their supporting muscles, such as their stomach, hamstrings, and gluteals are stronger and more flexible from regular conditioning.

However, people who play golf

or racquet sports are more prone to injuries because of the frequent twisting and bending motions. And casual athletes could be more at risk for injuries as well; depending on their level of fitness. Most inju-

ries of these types respond well to conservative chiropractic treatments. A chiropractor can show you how to prevent these injuries with proper conditioning and technique.

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