

# HEALTH MATTERS

## Medical Clinics Expand Care to Needy

### At food pantries, other gathering spots

(AP) -- An out-of-work David Thomas walked into a food pantry just seeking groceries. Thomas learned he was a stroke waiting to happen and got blood pressure medicine along with his bread.

Food pantries have long aimed to help heal hunger. A new project aims to see how well they can help heal high blood pressure, diabetes and other ailments, too.

It's part of a growing movement to offer medical care for the poor and uninsured in the places where they regularly gather.

"We're taking a window of opportunity approach," says Bill Solberg, director of community services for Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee, Wis. which co-funded the food pantry project. "We know we can see these people once a month."

Despite an increasing number of free medical clinics, treatment is hard for the needy to track down. That's especially true for the nation's top health problems — high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol — that require

ongoing care even when the person feels no symptoms if they're to avoid heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure and amputations.

Clinics require a special trip, a long wait, perhaps a baby sitter, annoyances for the well-to-do but huge obstacles for someone who must take three buses to reach the doctor or who loses a day of pay for the time off.

Consequently, "they only come when they're out of medicines or have symptoms. It's so frustrating," says Dr. Jim Sanders of the Medical College of Wisconsin.

So specialists increasingly are seeking other ways to address glaring disparities in U.S. health care, by taking care directly to where the people who need it most hang out.

Churches nationwide are offering blood pressure screening days and health fairs. Projects in numerous states are teaching barbers and beauticians how to teach their customers about stroke symptoms or to encourage a mammogram while giving a haircut.

Baltimore health officials are debating expanding the concept, with a proposal to offer blood pressure testing in 100 hair salons and barbershops in neighborhoods with high rates of heart disease. In Milwaukee, Columbia St.



David Thomas gets his blood pressure checked at a health clinic that works with a food pantry in Milwaukee, Wis. While there, he learned he was a prime candidate for a stroke. (AP photo)

Mary's and the medical college aim to provide scientific evidence that "chronic disease management" — ongoing wellness care — can significantly improve food pantry users' health in nine months.

The targets: High blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity and smoking. The plan:

Nurses will screen users of three food pantries for those health conditions when they come in for free groceries. Those with problems can get treated on the spot, with ongoing care as needed.

And because four of those conditions are diet-related, patients also will get nutrition education: Cook-

ing classes in the pantry's kitchen and tips to make the often carbohydrate- and salt-heavy food-bank staples a little healthier. Medical students will be sent shopping with patients, helping with things like label-checking for salt.

Sadly, high-carb and high-fat foods tend to be a lot cheaper than

fresh produce, and many of these families feed four for a month on \$250, Sanders says.

"Try to talk them into a head of broccoli. It's going to be an eye-opener."

Thomas, 47, learned his blood pressure was a sky-high 194 over 124 while visiting the project's initial food pantry clinic. A nurse told him he was at high risk for a stroke, and he agreed to treatment. Her warnings really sank in days later, when a meatpacking plant checked his health as part of a job interview, and said he'd be hired only after his hypertension was controlled.

Five days after starting pantry-provided pills, Thomas' blood pressure was dropping fast.

"This clinic is going to bring joy to the whole neighborhood," he said.

The program, which aims to treat 2,500 patients over three years, is funded by a \$450,000 grant from a charity, but patients are expected to contribute for medications if at all possible. Sanders predicts that for \$4 or \$5, a month's supply of generic hypertension or cholesterol medicine will be adequate for most. The seriously ill will be sent out for more advanced care, and nurses will enroll patients who qualify into Medicaid or other health programs.

## HEALTH WATCH

**Families Living With Mental Illness** -- A free 12-week life changing course designed for the family of mentally ill family members, teaching coping skills, how to deal with crisis and relapse and more, begins Jan. 10, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. To register, call 503-890-4805.

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

**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.

**Breastfeeding Preparation** -- Thursday, Jan. 10, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., this class is prepare expectant parents on the strategies and techniques of breastfeeding; \$42 fee per couple, to register call 503-574-6595.

**Babysitting Training** -- Thursday, Jan. 3 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Youth Employment Institute, 1704 N.E. 26th, will host the first aid training class participants will receive a first aid kit; \$40 fee. To register, call 503-888-2756.

**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.

**For Big Brothers & Big Sister-To-Be** -- Saturday, Jan. 19, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., special sibling class for children ages 3 to 6 helping to prepare for their role as an older sibling; \$20 fee (2 adults, 1 child), to register call 503-574-6595.

**Adult CPR/First Aid Class** -- Friday, Jan. 4, from 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., the Youth Employment Institute, 1704 N.E. 26th Ave., will host the adult training class participants will receive a first aid kit; \$47 fee. To register, call 503-888-2756.

**Newborn Care** -- Saturday, Jan. 19, from noon to 5 p.m., expectant parents will learn tips and techniques for caring for their newborn; \$45 fee per couple. To register call 503-574-6595.

**Welcome to Medicare** -- Make informed Medicare choices, attend the free class to explain Medicare options, Jan. 17, and Feb. 21, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the Bruning Center in Gresham, 1484 N.W. Civic Dr. For registration information, call 503-491-7572.

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

**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.

**Managing Chronic Hepatitis C** -- Third Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m., the informative session led by a registered nurse to help manage side effects of medications and dosage preparations and administration; doctors referral required to register call 503-251-6313.

**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.

**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.

**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 askthenutritionist@newseasonsmarket.com.

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

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

**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 currently open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

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Thank you: A Happy and healthy New Year to our great patients.

Now is the season to reflect on the events of the past year and look ahead to all the New Year has to offer. This past year has certainly been a happy one for all of us. We've had so many kind and wonderful patients.

To all of you, "thank you." We appreciate your courtesy and your zeal to share with friends how Chiropractic's natural healing has helped you. It is really exciting to have more and more people aware of the healing power of nature.

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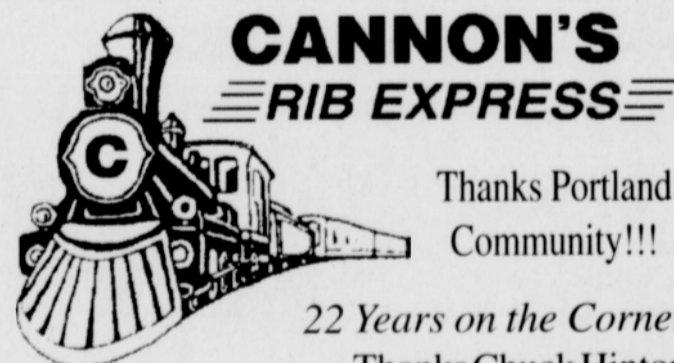
sense of well-being. If you ever have any questions about your health or about any of our many services, we'll always be happy to help.

Again, we wish you continued health throughout the coming New Year.

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