

HEALTH MATTERS

For Your Health Living with MS



Multiple sclerosis is not a death sentence

BY LARRY LUCAS

Every week, 200 people learn they have multiple sclerosis, or MS. For many, the diagnosis brings uncertainty and fear.

"When the neurologist said those words, 'You have MS,' it hit me like a brick. I thought the diagnosis was a death sentence," said television host Montel Williams about his experience with MS.

As we recognize Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in March, it's important to dispel myths and show that multiple sclerosis patients and their families know there is hope for living with this disease.

For example, most people with MS have a normal or near-normal life expectancy. What's more, the majority of people with MS do not become severely disabled.

But first, what is multiple sclerosis? According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, MS is a chronic, unpredictable neurological disease that affects the central nervous system.

There are four phases of the disease; most common is the "relapsing-remitting" phase where patients experience flare-ups followed by recovery periods. The National Institutes of Health report that many investigators believe MS to be a disease in which the body, through its immune system, launches a defensive attack against its own nerve tissues. Why the body attacks itself in this way is still unknown.

MS is difficult to diagnose because symptoms can be as unpredictable as the weather. Some people go years without noticeable symptoms, most noticing them between ages 20 and 40.

Multiple sclerosis affects twice

as many women as men, according to the Mayo Clinic. Although African-Americans are half as likely as Caucasians to develop multiple sclerosis, research from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society shows that the disease affects African-Americans more aggressively than their counterparts.

While there is no cure for MS, there are now 46 medications that have been shown to "modify" or slow down the underlying cause of MS.

More good news is on the horizon. There are currently 547 new medicines in development to treat a variety of neurological disorders, including MS. This includes 46 treatments for multiple sclerosis, including a potential vaccine in development that is designed to specifically target T-cells that contain disease-specific proteins. The cells can damage the sheath that protects the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, resulting in multiple sclerosis.

In addition to medicines, there are certain lifestyle choices that may help patients better manage MS. Physical and occupational therapy can help build strength and teach patients how to use tools that can assist in everyday tasks, all of which helps preserve independence.

Many patients also find that extreme heat worsens symptoms, so they take extra care when using a sauna or taking a hot bath. Counseling is also important for patients facing a diagnosis. It's natural for patients who suffer from any disease, including MS, to feel sad, angry or confused. Reaching out to friends, family and others in the MS community can help.

Larry Lucas is a vice president for Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

Uninsured Die from Delayed Treatment

Study finds one death each day

(AP) -- On average, one working-age Oregonian dies each day due to lack of health insurance, according to a new report by the healthcare consumer group Families USA.

The study builds on earlier national reports done by the Institute of Medicine and the Urban Institute that found thousands of people in America die each year as a result of being uninsured.

Studies show people without

health insurance are more likely to delay seeking medical care, become sicker and die earlier than people with insurance.

The state-by-state analysis estimates the number of adults between the ages of 25 and 64 in Oregon who died as a result of no health insurance was nearly 1,900 between 2000 and 2006.

"It's important to understand and document the consequences of lack of health coverage; it's more important that we do something to assure people get the healthcare they need," Dr. Bruce Goldberg, who heads Oregon's Department of Human Services,

said in a statement.

Evan Saulino, a Portland family physician, said the report reflects the reality he sees regularly at some safety-net clinics.

One of his patients, whose family requested her name be withheld, had delayed seeking treatment until her health-insurance coverage kicked in at a new job. Eventually the symptoms became too much and she came to his office. She had kidney cancer.

The treatment was cost-prohibitive. She struggled to get financial assistance or other help and wasn't able to start treatment until two weeks before her death.

When filling out the patient's death certificate, Saulino says he wanted to write "lack of health insurance" or "lack of financial resources" on the cause of death line.

"Every year of inaction by policymakers is literally a matter of life and death for hundreds of Oregonians," says Maribeth Healey, executive director for advocacy group Oregonians for Health Security.

Families USA said it is rolling out the results of other states in the analysis and although that is not complete, Oregon is not expected to be an anomaly.

HEALTH WATCH

Wellness Check-Up -- Sunday, March 30, from 2 to 5 p.m., the Stone Tower Church, 3010 N.E. Holladay, will host this free health screening that includes blood-pressure and diabetes screening, cooking demonstrations, food samples and more. For more information, call 503-232-6018.

Yoga for Relaxation -- Wednesdays beginning April 2, from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m., this six-week class teaches the ancient techniques of deep breathing and stretching to improve your sense of well-being; \$49 fee. To register, call 503-574-6595.

Welcome to Medicare -- Thursday, April 17, from 7 to 9 p.m., Multnomah County Aging Disability Service will conduct the free classes for those new to Medicare, the class will help to explain the fundamentals of Medicare. For more information, call 503-491-7572.

Let's Talk About It: IBS and Women -- Wednesday, April 23, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., expert George Koval will discuss causes and treatments for the common disorder IBS (irritable bowel syndrome). For more information on this free session, call 503-574-6595.

Tools for Caregivers -- Six-week educational series are offered to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend with a chronic illness. The classes are being held at several locations and dates. Call 503-413-6465 for more information.

Helping Babies to Communicate -- Wednesdays, April 2 thru April 23, from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m., Dawn Prochovnic, Creator of SmallTalk Workshops will present the tips and tricks and the art of teaching sign language to babies before they even begin to talk; \$70 per couple. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Peer-to-Peer Recovery -- Peer-to-peer education recovery course is a free, nine-week course on the topic of recovery for any person with a serious mental illness. The courses are led by mentors who are recovering from mental illness and are trained to teach coping strategies to others. For more information, call 503-228-5692.

Children's Health Wellness Fair -- Wednesday, April 23, from 4 to 8 p.m., the Children's Community Clinic will sponsor the fair at the SEI building; to promote awareness to children about their nutrition, health issues and fitness.

What About Boys -- Wednesday, April 23, from 7 to 9 p.m., Legacy Meridian Park Hospital, 19300 S.W. 65th Ave., will host the forum discussing the developmental perspectives of raising young boys, and the problems they are facing today; \$5 fee at the door. To register, call 503-335-3500.

Health Inequities -- The public is invited to join in the dialogues with community members, organizations, business leaders and local elected officials to discuss the root causes of health inequities as well as long-term solutions in a this seven-part series. For neighborhood locations, dates and times, visit mchealth.org/healthequity.

Couples Workshop -- Saturday, April 19, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at 19500 S.E. Stark St., couples will learn essential relationship skills, including conflict management, and understanding communication styles; \$50 per couple. To register, call 503-286-6816.

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.

Bereavement Support Groups -- Free, safe confidential group meetings for those who have experienced the death of a loved one offered on various nights and locations. For information and registration, call 503-215-4622.

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.

ABCs of Health Careers Explored

Conference aims for diversity

A day-long workshop hopes to encourage a diverse array of students to consider health careers.

College students wanting to learn more about what it takes to be a dentist, a doctor, a pharmacist, a nurse, an engineer, a radiologist, or other health or science professional can visit Oregon Health & Science University on Friday, April 18, for the eighth-annual Health, Science & Engineering Careers Conference.

The event is hosted by the OHSU Center for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs and will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Old Library Auditorium, on the OHSU Marquam Hill campus.

The conference particularly



Maria Elena Ruiz

hopes to serve underrepresented minorities and diverse students by increasing their awareness of OHSU's admission requirements, faculty, resources and campus life.

This year's keynote speaker is Maria Elena Ruiz, an OHSU School of Nursing assistant

professor of nursing. Ruiz is a member of the Center for Health Disparities Research, Oregon Master Public Health Program and president of National Association of Hispanic Nurses, Oregon chapter.

The registration deadline is for the week of March 24. Registration is free, but capacity is limited. For more information or to register for this event, contact the OHSU Center for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs at 503 494-5657 or cedma@ohsu.edu, or register online at ohsu.edu/academic/diversity.

WOMEN LEADERS & THEIR CONTRIBUTION

"Never Underestimate the Power of a Woman"

Reverend Renee Ward -- Founder of NICHE' Public Relations. In 2006 Rep. Chip Shields (D-43, N/NE Portland) appointed northeast Portland activist the Rev. Renee' Ward as his chief of staff for the 2007 Legislature. Her civic and social justice activities include being a member of the Crisis Response Team for the Northeast Precinct of the Portland Police Bureau, as well as an advocate for health education and prevention concerning both HIV/AIDS and breast cancer in the African American community.



Cynthia Hamilton -- CEO Girl Scouts - Columbia River Council Ms. Hamilton served on the Board of Directors for ten years- three of those years as Chair of the Board. She was appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2006. She guides a staff of fifty, manages a five million dollar annual budget and advocates for 12,000 girls in Oregon and SW Washington.



Peggy Fowler -- CEO and President of Portland General Electric (PGE) Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the country and Peggy Fowler, is doing something about it. A passionate advocate for health and wellness, Fowler is channeling her energy into raising funds and awareness about the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle by serving as chair of the 2008 Start! Greater Portland Heart Walk. Taskforce and board member of The Regence Group and Regence BlueCross/BlueShield of Oregon.



Maxine Fitzpatrick -- Executive Director of Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc. (PCRI), a non-profit community development corporation specializing in the development and management of affordable housing. Maxine has been employed by PCRI since 1993 and is the organization's first and only director. Maxine is actively involved in the housing industry. She serves on the Interstate and North Macadam Urban Renewal Area Committees, the Community Development Network, and has participated in the City of Portland's minority homeownership initiative, Operation HOME. Maxine along with two other minority CDC directors recently formed a coalition to advocate for equitable distribution of housing and other resources for minorities in the City of Portland.



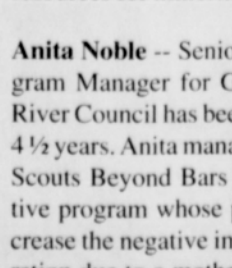
Nova Hill -- Executive Administrative Assistant. Nova is one of the main spark plugs for Project Clean Slate and Administrative Assistant to Roy Jay. Today, her invaluable dedication puts her front and center with city, county, federal officials plus numerous business and professionals in her day to day scheduling of events, meetings and activities for Project Clean Slate, African American Chamber or any number of other operations and community service activities of her boss.



Sherry Sheng -- Retired-Deputy Director of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department She retired from 25 years of public service in January 2004. Her last position was the deputy director of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. In that capacity, she oversaw programs in international trade, business and industry, telecommunications, and administration. Sherry was the Director of the Oregon Zoo for nearly ten years where she engaged in wildlife conservation internationally.



Bernadette Artharee -- President and CEO of Coast Industries, Inc., one of Oregon's oldest minority owned firms; founded in 1957 by her father Henry D. Scott, Jr., the firm's contracts with Lockheed-Martin maintaining the NASA facility in New Orleans. Bernadette was recognized in 2006 with the Minority Enterprise Development Week Award for Service Contractor of the Year. Her community involvement includes volunteer services with Donate Life Northwest, the National Kidney Foundation, and was a co-founding member of the Family of One, a minority educational network, focused on kidney transplant donation.



Anita Noble -- Senior Membership & Program Manager for Girl Scouts, Columbia River Council has been with the Council for 4 1/2 years. Anita manages the Council's Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Troop 60, an innovative program whose primary goal is to decrease the negative impact of parental separation due to a mother's incarceration. The girls of Troop 60 are provided with a network of caring Girl Scout leaders, teaching them life skills and encouraging academic achievement.



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