

# SENIOR LIVING

## Providence Hospital Goes 'No Smoking'

Providence health facilities in Oregon have joined more than 1,200 hospitals and clinics nationwide that have gone tobacco free.

"As a leading health care provider, Providence Health & Services is committed to promoting active, healthy lifestyles for our patients and employees," said Russ Danielson, the health provider's chief executive.

Providence's new policy affects 75 properties statewide, including hospitals, clinics, and administration and service buildings.

To make patients, visitors and employees more comfortable as the policy is enforced, Providence is providing "care packs" containing nicotine lozenges and information on tobacco cessation resources in the community through the end of January.

"While the dangers of tobacco use have been clearly demonstrated, Providence also recognizes that tobacco is highly addictive and difficult for some people to quit using," Danielson said. "Providing compassionate service is part of our Mission, so implementation of our new policy will include providing support for people who either want to quit or may not necessarily be ready to do so."

## Knowing the Signs of Elder Abuse

### Few cases are reported

Officials are focusing on the fact that elder abuse is a growing problem nationally and in Oregon, but very few abuse cases are ever reported. National studies estimate that 3-5 million seniors age 65 and older nationwide have experienced abuse, but only one in five abuse cases is reported.

"No type of abuse should be tolerated, but elder abuse is an under-reported crime because people do not know how to recognize the signs, and they don't know how to report it when they do see it," says James D. Toews, Oregon Department of Human Services assistant director for seniors and people with disabilities. "We have to raise awareness of elder abuse and ways to report it before we can hope to prevent it."

Signs of elder abuse include physical injuries, emotional or be-

havioral changes, a decline in self-care, and changes in financial status.

Oregon law defines elder abuse as physical injury not caused by accident, neglect leading to harm, abandonment, intentional infliction of physical pain or injury, unwanted sexual contact or the inability to consent to sexual contact, and threatening to take or taking money or property.

Anyone witnessing or suspecting abuse of those populations is asked to call the toll-free Abuse Hotline: 1-800-232-3020. The Department of Human Services and Area Agencies on Aging provide protective services and investigate reports of suspected abuse.

They determine if abuse has occurred and work with law enforcement when a potential crime may have occurred.



The emotional and physical toll of elder abuse on the victim and his or her family can be devastating.

DHS investigated 12,897 allegations of abuse of elderly or physically disabled Oregonians in 2007 and substantiated more than 4,200, a 5.5 percent increase over 2006. Based on national trends, the actual number of cases of elder abuse in Oregon may have been much higher.

Elder Abuse Prevention Month activities, held in conjunction with national efforts by the National Center on Elder Abuse, are designed to raise that awareness and help Oregonians understand how to help this vulnerable population, Toews says.

"Our staff do an excellent job of identifying these situations and providing assistance, but they need help from the public," says Toews. "As Oregon's population ages, this type of abuse is bound to increase unless we all become more aware of the signs of abuse and more willing to report or prevent it."

## Making Every Dollar Count Save with energy efficiency

Making every dollar count is important during these difficult financial times. Fortunately, practicing energy efficiency in your home is an excellent way to create cash without sacrificing comfort. And it's good for the environment.

The Bonneville Power Administration brings you these easy-to-implement energy-efficiency tips:

Use compact fluorescent bulbs. Replace old-fashioned incandescent bulbs, which use 75 percent more energy, in the most commonly used areas in your home, such as the kitchen and family room.

Lower the thermostat. Each



degree you lower the thermostat on your heating system decreases your fuel bill by 3 percent. Going from 72 degrees down to 68 degrees doesn't matter much in terms of comfort, but it can save up to 12 percent

on your heating bill.

Winterize your home. Most homes have cracks and leaks that are equal to a two-foot square open window. Apply weather-stripping to stop drafts around doors and windows and caulk cracks. For large cracks that don't contain moving parts, such as in walls, floors or foundations, apply spray foam insulation.

BPA and its utility customers are partnering to promote energy efficiency. In fiscal year 2008 alone, BPA-sponsored energy efficiency programs and incentives produced energy savings equal to the amount of electricity it would take to power 65,000 homes in the Pacific Northwest for an entire year.

## Home Care Benefits Outlined

An audit of Multnomah County's Medicaid Long-term Care Program, which serves very low-income seniors and disabled adults, found that home care and other alternatives are

less expensive and less restrictive than nursing facilities, and allow higher levels of care for patients.

The recent audit found that in 2007, the average annual cost-per-client for

in-home care was \$7,600 compared to the average cost of nursing home care per client of \$32,500.

The long-term care program, managed by the Aging and Disability Services Division, provides case management for over 7,000 county resi-

dents. The goal of the program is to link needy individuals with appropriate services and to provide clients with alternatives to nursing home placement, such as in-home care or assisted living facilities.

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