

# HEALTH MATTERS

## County Clinics Get Shot in the Arm

### More needy patients to receive care

Multnomah County has taken a drubbing from the ailing economy resulting in over \$60 million budget cuts, which have limited the ability of the county to provide health services to those that need it most.

But help is on the horizon as part of the \$787 billion federal stimulus package has begun trickling in.

Anticipating the number of people without health insurance to soar Congress mandated that \$337 million of the money be set aside for community health centers.

Multnomah County's Health Department recently received an \$854,000 grant from the stimulus package to help keep its primary health care centers provide services for the needy. Half of the money has already come in. The other comes next year.

The money will be used to take in an additional 5,500 poor or uninsured patients during the recession, and will allow the county to hire 18 new doctors,



Dr. Carla Radcliffe (left) of the La Clinica de Buena Salud, the Multnomah County Health Department clinic at 6736 N.E. Killingsworth St., meets with Sharon Botchway, RN supervisor.

nurses and support staff.

More than 60 percent of those new patients will be un-

insured. County clinics have

been operating at capacity and have been forced to turn away

patients for a lack of resources at some locations.

According to Steve Suo, the

county's senior policy advisor,

there are three clinics that will benefit from the money. He's

not sure exactly what the breakdown is for the county's six primary health care clinics, but comes at a needed time.

"We're at the limit," said Suo.

One of these is La Clinica de la Buena Salud, located at 6736 N.E. Killingsworth. The clinic's staff speaks Spanish and English and offers services including family planning, mental health services, primary care, and immunizations services.

"It serves a diverse population," said Suo of the clinic.

There's more money coming down the pipe.

The county is slated to begin a \$2 million capital improvement project that will be used to upgrade facilities and equipment, with stimulus money. The Northeast Health Center located on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard will be one of these.

Besides the six primary care clinics, Multnomah County operates 13 school-based health centers, and clinics for specific diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and STDs.

County health department providers served 66,500 people in 2007-2008 -- nearly 1 in 10 county residents. The count included 1 out of every 5 children who reside in Multnomah County.

## Weight Gain is Public Health Crisis

### Obesity on Rise

A new report shows that obesity among Oregon adults and children is increasing at alarming rates.

"One in five Oregon children today is overweight or obese," said Dr. Bruce Goldberg, director of the Oregon Department of Human Services said. "This is a public health crisis, and there is no time to lose in taking action."

In Oregon today, six of every 10 adults is overweight or obese -- 1.7 million of Oregon's total adult population of 2.9 million. These adults have a higher risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke as well as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Every year, another 43,500 Or-

egon adults become obese. The proportion of obese adults has more than doubled in the past 18 years and the proportion of obese children has tripled in the past 20. Treating diseases related to obesity costs Oregon \$781 million per year.

"The health care costs are staggering, but we cannot simply treat our way out of the problem," Goldberg said. "What we need, and the work of the task force supports this, is a comprehensive focus on preventing obesity."

"Obesity is not a problem of willpower or personal character.



Dr. Bruce Goldberg

People are not all that different than they were 30 years ago. What has changed is how and where we live," said Mary Lou Hennrich of the Oregon's Public Health Institute. "It is too easy to find high-calorie, low-nutrition food and way too easy to be sedentary at work and at home. We need to get to work and make healthy choices the easy choices."

Changing the environments where Oregonians live, work, study and play is a high priority of the report by the Oregon Task Force for a Comprehensive Obesity Prevention Initiative.

The report states that for the state to even begin to stem the tide of obesity, we must invest in a comprehensive prevention and education program, bring physical activity and nutritious food back into our schools and our daily lives and make the healthy choices the easy choices.

The report also recommended policy changes in the areas of land use and transportation, and changes in school, worksite and health care settings: "Choices about how active we are and what we eat are embedded in our social, cultural and physical environments. Changes in these environments caused the obesity epidemic. Changes in these environments are critical to ending the obesity epidemic."

## Big Gaps in Health Coverage

About one in three Oregonians younger than age 65 has gone without health insurance for at least a portion of the last two years, ac-

ording to a new report from Families USA, a national health care reform advocacy group.

The group is releasing data by

state to add momentum to the push for reform. In Oregon, most of the uninsured are working.

Families USA Executive Director Ron Pollack says the lack of insurance is not just a temporary situation.

"One of the significant things to understand about this is that the overwhelming majority of these 1.1 million Oregonians, 75.8 percent -- more than three out of every four -- were uninsured for at least six months," Pollack said.

## Stimulus to Feed Low Income Seniors

Hunger is an often overlooked side effect to a poor economy. But help is on the way thanks to \$1.2 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide meals to low income senior citizens.

"This money comes at a time when an estimated 12 percent of Oregon families don't have enough food on their shelves, when Oregon ranks as the third hungriest state in the nation, when food stamp applications are increasing and when local food banks are being flooded," U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon said.

Wyden and Oregon's other U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, said \$800,000 of the federal monies will be used for meals at senior centers and other locations and \$400,000 will go to meals on wheels programs

"The funds are a literal lifeline for Oregon seniors who could not get by without these programs, said Merkley. "Helping our most vulnerable seniors through this difficult time is a critical component of getting our nation back on track."

In addition to providing meals, the money will also restore nutrition services that have been cut and restore positions which may have been eliminated or reduced.

**Red Cross Continuing Education** -- The Oregon Trail Chapter Red Cross now offers credits to help professionals maintain licensing or certification. For a cumulative list, visit [pdxinfo.net](http://pdxinfo.net).

**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.

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

**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.

**Cholesterol Profiles** -- Calls helps you keep an eye on your cholesterol and other indicators of heart health; educational material provided. For more information, call 503-261-6611.

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

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

## HEALTH WATCH

**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.

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

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

**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.

**Lead Poisoning Prevention** -- Learn how to protect your family from lead poisoning. Ideal for folks in live in older homes with children or pregnant women. Qualified participants receive a free kit of safety and testing supplies. Call 503-284-6827.

**Family Caregiver Support Group** -- This topic-oriented group offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges and re-

wards of providing care to an older relative or friend. Meets the first Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital.

**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.

**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 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.

**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](http://providence.org/classes).

**Powerful Tools For Caregivers** -- 6-week educational series designed to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for relatives or friends with chronic illness. Class size is limited, and registration is required. Call 503-413-8018.

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I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. **John 9:4**