

HEALTH

Cultural Competency Training Rejected

Advocates disappointed but will try again

A bill to train health care professionals in cultural competency, reduce the costs of healthcare and provide better care for Oregon's growingly diverse population has been rejected in the state Legislature.

Senate Bill 97 recently failed on the House floor by a 30-30 vote, with all Democrats supporting the measure and all Republicans opposed.

According to State Rep. Tina Kotek, a north Portland Democrat, the defeat showed a lack of understanding of the issues facing health care professionals and their patients.

"This is a much greater problem than most people realize," said Kotek. "Studies have shown a lack

of understanding about varying cultures, their health care needs and the varying propensity for certain diseases, adding hundreds of millions of dollars of cost to the health care system."

The People of Color Health Equity Collaborative, a coalition of 20 community-based organizations that works to address health issues through public policy were major backers of the bill.

The organization said the defeat was a missed opportunity to address health disparities amongst Oregon's growing diverse communities and improve health outcomes for all Oregonians, but vowed to continue to advance the cause.



Rep. Tina Kotek

State Rep. Greg Mathews, D-Gresham, a firefighter, paramedic and former police officer, said his col-

leagues strongly support improved training in cultural competency for medical professionals.

"We are the first responders," he said. "The more we know about the needs or wishes of a particular person, the better we can care for them."

After voting yes to move the bill out of the House Health Care Committee bill, some Republican lawmakers, including Bill Kenemer and Jim Thompson, voted no on the floor.

Kotek explained, "This is a disappointing vote on a bill that had no opposition from anyone but Republicans in this building."

Mathews explained the bill has no fiscal impact, but will make a large impact within communities throughout Oregon. "It's more than just

language," he said. "It is better understanding of the cultural differences people hold."

According to the health equity collaborative, the communities who are most often impacted by health disparities are also those who are disenfranchised from decision making processes, and new strategies should be required.

The organization issued a statement saying they have not given up in securing better health care delivery for their children, elders, and families:

"Cultural competence must be a part of Oregon's health care reform and redesign strategy...Cultural competent services have been proven to improve quality of care, patient satisfaction, health outcomes and reduces costs."

For Your Health

Breastfeeding Benefits

BY DR. JAMES N. MARTIN



Breastfeeding is a natural, age-old practice that holds numerous benefits for both baby and mother.

While it is not advisable for some women—such as those with certain infections and chronic illnesses—the vast majority of women are capable of breast-feeding and are encouraged to at least attempt it.

Breast milk provides complete nutrition, helping to build strong digestive and immune systems and

may protect against respiratory infections, some childhood cancers, and obesity. Breastfed babies often have less gas, constipation, and diarrhea, fewer feeding problems, and less illness than do formula-fed babies.

For nursing mothers, breastfeeding provides an inexpensive and convenient feeding option. Women who breastfeed may lose weight faster, experience less

stress during the postpartum period, build stronger bonds with their babies, and have a decreased risk of breast cancer.

Before it's time to deliver, notify your doctor and the health care team that delivers your baby of your breastfeeding plans. They will help you start and support your breastfeeding once the baby is born. Try to nurse within the first hour after delivery while your newborn is alert and ready to suck. After your baby gets the hang of breastfeeding, nurse on demand.

Use signs of hunger, such as when your baby nuzzles against your breast, makes sucking motions, or puts a hand in his or her mouth as

a guide for when to feed your baby. Many newborns will nurse between eight and 12 times every 24 hours for about 10–15 minutes on each breast. Your doctor can explain how to tell if your baby is getting enough milk through diaper-changing patterns and weight gain after the first few days.

Breastfeeding women require about 500 more calories a day than they needed before becoming pregnant. Eat a well-balanced diet that includes at least 1,000 milligrams of calcium, and drink at least eight glasses of liquid a day. Try to identify and avoid foods that seem to cause a reaction in your baby. Rashes, fussiness, diarrhea, or congestion after nursing can signal a food allergy.

Exclusive breastfeeding can temporarily stop ovulation, making it

less likely that you will get pregnant. However, if you are trying to avoid pregnancy, you still need to use birth control. Barrier methods, such as condoms and intra-uterine devices, will not affect your milk supply.

If you decide to use hormonal contraception, your doctor can help you choose a progestin-only method. The estrogen in combination pills can diminish milk supply early on and should not be used until nursing is established.

Ob-gyns, pediatricians, nurses, and lactation specialists can be great breast-feeding resources. Be sure to consult with them about health questions and practical issues that may arise.

Dr. James N. Martin Jr. is president of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

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\$20 value

"Where to go so you know"

Multnomah County Health Department's HIV Community Test Site offers **confidential** HIV testing with or without your name at these locations:

Downtown Community Test Site

Call 503.988.3775 for an appt.

Mon | Thurs | Fri

426 SW Stark St., 6th Floor, Portland, 97204

Northeast Health Center

Just walk in

Tuesdays | 5:30 - 7:15 pm

5329 NE MLK Jr. Blvd, 2nd Floor, Portland, 97211

"Free with this coupon"



Se habla español: other interpretation by appointment.

HEALTHWATCH

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.

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.

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.

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.

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