

HEALTH

Seattle Adopts Medical Pot Rules

Brings a licensing system for distribution

Seattle's mayor has signed into law a licensing system for medical marijuana distribution, with the city's attorney vowing to show that pot regulation can be done "safely and humanely."

Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn, in a 40-minute signing ceremony on Thursday, said that licensed medical marijuana suppliers must comply with city codes that govern everything from public nuisance complaints to plumbing and food-handling.

The City Council passed the ordinance unanimously on July 19, nearly three months after Washington's governor signed into law a statewide measure allowing cities to regulate and license pro-



duction, processing and distribution of medical marijuana on a limited basis.

The state statute required storefront dispensaries and medical pot suppliers to reorganize as small, cooperative ventures that serve up to 10 patients.

Called "collective gardens," these businesses may grow as many as 45 plants, but no more than 15 per person.

Although cannabis is listed as an illegal narcotic under federal law, 15 states, including Oregon, and the District of Columbia have statutes decriminalizing marijuana as a medical treatment, according to the National Drug Policy Alliance.

Pot was first legalized as medicine in Washington under a 1988 voter-approved initiative. The law signed by Gov. Christine Gregoire this year was designed by supporters to bring greater order to a burgeoning medical marijuana supply chain that critics say had gotten out of hand.

Health Insurance Hike Lowered

Local lawmaker to keep up call for fairness

Additionally, Regence had built into its rate request a 1.1 percent profit, which DCBS found unnecessary given that the company's current profits are healthy.



Chip Shields

State Rep. Chip Shields, representing north and northeast Portland, offered a package of bills in the recent Legislative session that would have addressed spiraling insurance rate hikes, but he said they

The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services has rejected a 22.1 percent health insurance rate increase request from Regence BlueCross BlueShield and instead approved a 12.8 percent increase.

The increase affects about 59,000 customers who buy individual health plans directly from Regence. It is an average, meaning some Regence members will see greater or lesser increases in their September bills.

The department disagreed with Regence's estimates of future claims costs, including some reform costs under the federal Affordable Care Act.

were scuttled with opposition by the insurance lobby.

Shields said he was encouraged that the Insurance Division was listening to the small business people who testified about the Regence increase.

He said he will reintroduce even tougher legislation next year and promises to monitor the Insurance Division to make the health insurance rate review process fairer and more transparent.

HEALTH WATCH

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.

Families with Mental Illness -- A free, 12-week course for people whose family members live with mental illness is offered at Emanuel Hospital, Mt. Hood Medical Center and Providence Medical Center. The course has been described as "life-changing" by former participants. Registration is required by calling 503-203-3326.

Cholesterol Profiles -- Get the resources to help you keep an eye on your cholesterol and other indicators of heart health. Educational material provided. For more information, call 503-261-6611.

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.

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.

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

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

Mind Body Health Class -- Learn and practice techniques to help you improve your mood, health and wellbeing, including effective ways to manage difficult emotions and chronic stress or illness. Registration is \$70 for Kaiser Permanente members and \$95 for nonmembers. Call 503-286-6816.

Red Cross Certification -- The Oregon Trail Chapter Red Cross now offers credits to help professionals maintain licensing or certification. For a cumulative list, visit pdxinfo.net.

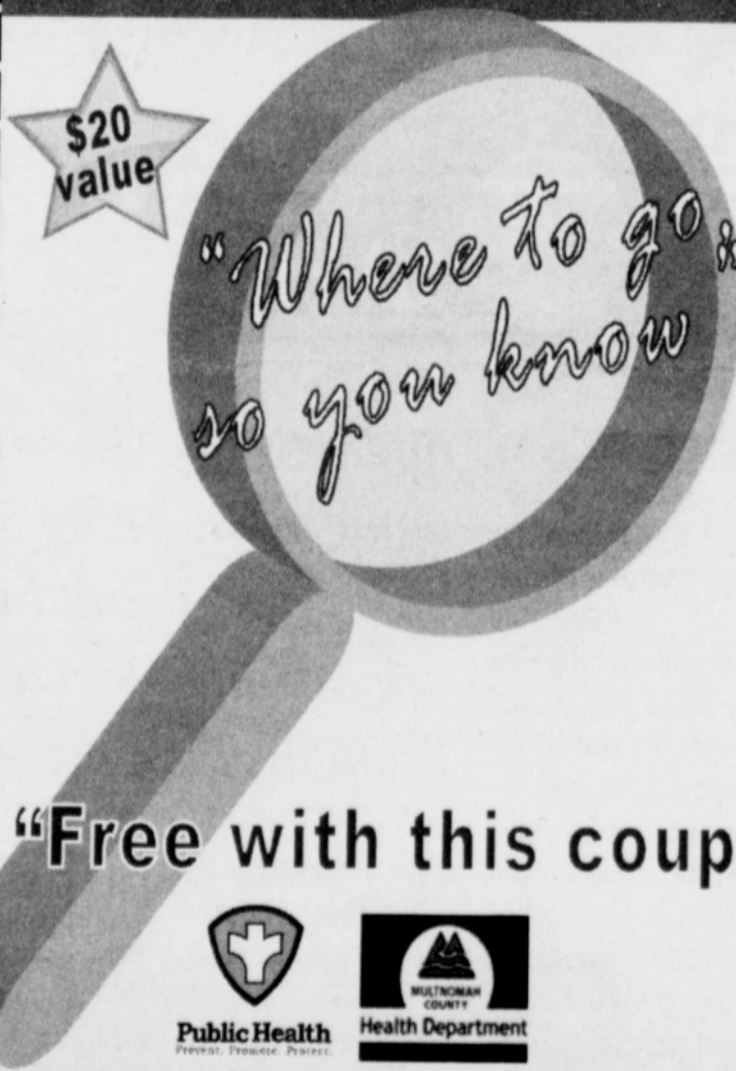
Weight Loss Help -- Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) meetings are held every Wednesday from 8:45 to 10 a.m. at the Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40th Ave. Anyone interested is invited to visit and learn more. For details, call 503-287-0731.

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

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.

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