

HEALTH



Dental Problems Increase ER Visits

It's a costly choice with fewer treatment options

(AP) — More Americans are turning to the emergency room for routine dental problems — a choice that often costs 10 times more than preventive care and offers far fewer treatment options than a dentist's office, according to an analysis of government data and dental research.

Most of those emergency visits involve trouble such as toothaches that could have been avoided with regular checkups but went untreated, in many cases because of a shortage of dentists, particularly those willing to treat Medicaid patients, the analysis said.

The number of ER visits nationwide for dental problems increased 16 percent from 2006 to 2009, and the report released Tuesday by the Pew Center on the States suggests the trend is continuing.

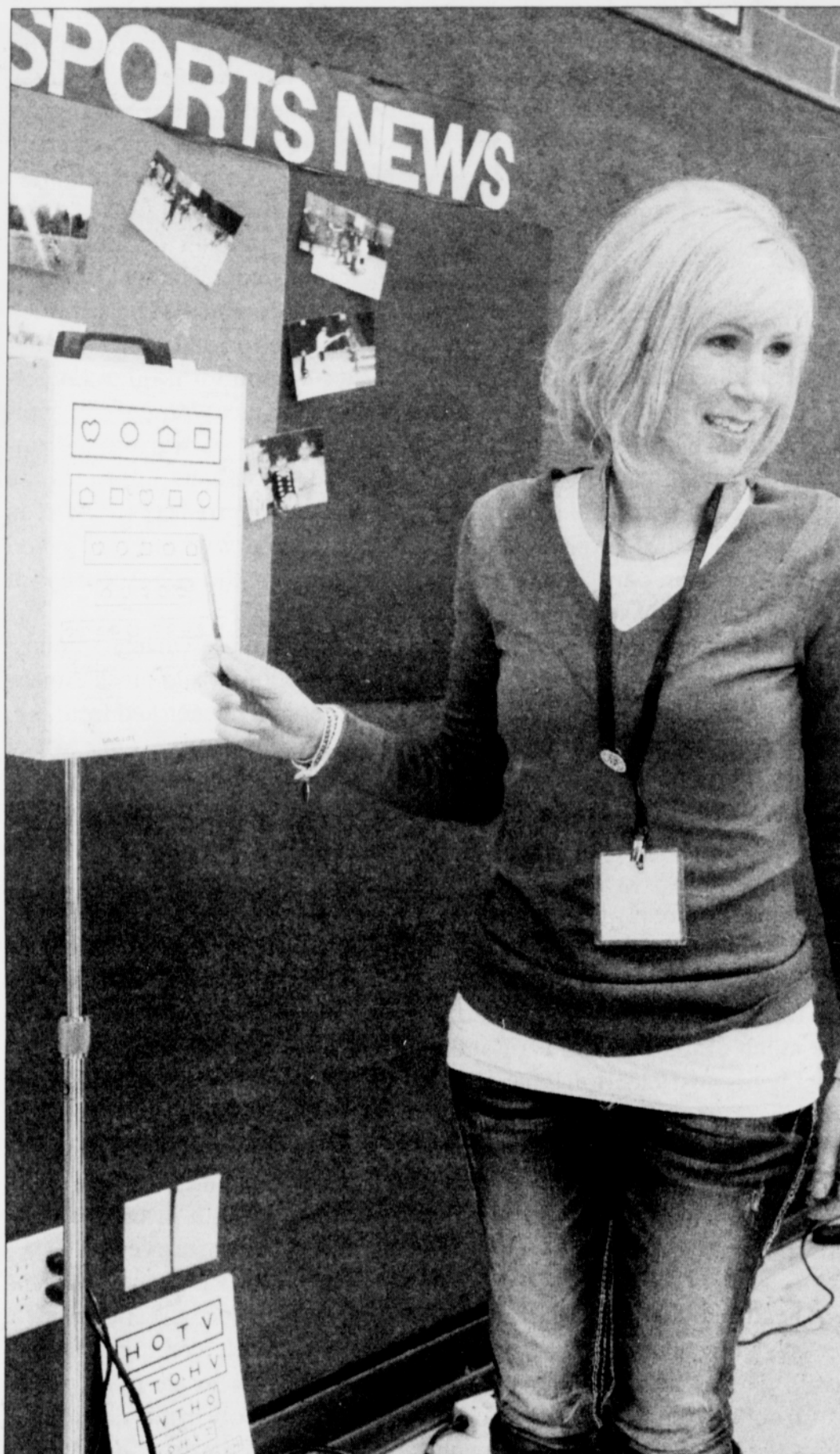
Many ER dental visits involve the same patients seeking additional care.

That's because emergency rooms generally are not staffed by dentists. They can offer pain relief and medicine for infected gums but not much more for dental patients. And many patients are unable to find or afford follow-up treatment, so they end up back in the emergency room.

"Emergency rooms are really the canary in the coal mine. If people are showing up in the ER for dental care, then we've got big holes in the delivery of care," said Shelly Gehshan, director of Pew's children's dental campaign. "It's just like pouring money down a hole."

"It's the wrong service, in the wrong setting, at the wrong time," she said.

Club Sponsors Health Screenings



A volunteer assists in a free health screening sponsored by the Oregon Lions Club.

The Oregon Lions Club is working with the Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation to combat preventative blindness and deafness in the community through free health screenings.

A series of mobile health screening clinics this month will offer free tests in visual acuity, hearing, blood pressure, diabetes (with a 3 hour fast) and glaucoma.

Many community members lacking primary care are unaware they have health conditions that threaten their sight, jobs, quality of life and potentially their lives. The mission of the Foundation is "to screen, treat, save, and restore sight and hearing, in partnership with Lions Clubs, in order to prevent blindness and deafness for those in need."

The screenings are scheduled Saturday, March 10, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Community Health Fair, Hillsboro Presbyterian Church, 172 N.E. 32nd Ave.; Sunday, March 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Pius X Church, 1280 N.W. Saltzman Rd. in Beaverton; and Saturday, March 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth.

To schedule a screening, call 503-413-7329.

Recovery from Opioids

Doctor publishes help guide book

Addiction to Prescription Painkillers and the Street Drug Heroin introduces readers to the physical, emotional and environmental factors of opioid addiction, the various methods of treatment, as well as provides inspiration to those seeking to escape addiction.

The book was written by Dr. Gregory H. Pierce to provide a clear account of how opioid addiction develops through physiological changes and to give meaningful insight into the pros and cons of various treatment methods without complicated medical terminology.

In 11 focused chapters, readers



Dr. Gregory Pierce

will discover why some people become addicted, and what they can do to escape addiction. The guide includes a chapter full of important

"seeds for success," key concepts to remember that can speed the recovery process and lead to constructive self-management.

"Addiction to opiates is a complicated and challenging problem that requires a change in one's beliefs, thoughts and behavior to overcome it," says Dr. Pierce. "But, with the right information and inspiration, it is achievable."

Dr. Pierce draws on his decades of experience as a medical doctor and director of drug treatment clinics to provide a complete guide to help those seeking to overcome this growing affliction.

Addiction to Prescription Painkillers and the Street Drug Heroin is available for sale online at Amazon.com and other channels.

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