

HEALTH

Reversing the History of Illness

Sobering picture for residents of color

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

People of color in Multnomah County face “extremely sobering” disparities that lead to more illness, fewer opportunities and shorter lives.

Entering 2015, public health officials have a new mandate to address racial and ethnic health disparities in the Portland area where African Americans experience grave differences in almost all 33 measures of health, but where disparities also

persist for Latinos, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

“The number and breadth of the disparities across this range of indicators highlights the need of a multi-layered, cross sectional strategy to address them. This is not just a Health Department issue,” said Dr. Julie Maher, the health official who led a recent analysis. “This is an extremely sobering picture for our

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Representatives from the Multnomah County offices of Health, Diversity and Equity, Human Services and the Board of Commissioners give voice to the health disparities faced by the county's residents of color.

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Give Kids a Smile

Kaiser offers free clinics on Saturday

Kaiser Permanente Northwest is offering free dental sealants, fluoride varnishes, and vaccinations to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured children in partnership with the American Dental Association and National Children's Dental Health Month.

The free clinics, called Give Kids a Smile, will take place on Saturday, Feb. 7 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at seven Kaiser dental offices spanning Salem to Longview. Services will be provided on a first come,

first served basis with a capacity to provide dental services for 800 children and vaccinations for 525 children.

Dental sealants and fluoride varnishes are safe, effective, and painless ways to prevent cavities. In Oregon, children who haven't received their vaccinations by Feb. 18 can't attend classes.

“We want to help keep kids healthy, at school, and ready to learn,” a Kaiser official said.

Better health here for you

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Dr. Maria Macoscar, Physician, MD, PhD

www.healthshare.org



Dr. Charles Drew was an African-American surgeon who pioneered methods of storing blood plasma for transfusion and organized the first large-scale blood bank in the U.S.

Charles Drew Blood Drive

Donations to save lives; honor black history

The American Red Cross encourages eligible donors to celebrate Black History Month by donating blood and ensuring a diverse blood supply is available for patients.

In the spirit of Dr. Charles Drew, an African-American surgeon who was the first medical director of the American Red Cross and a modern blood-banking pioneer, eligible donors are encouraged to make an appointment to donate blood.

Seasonal flu and inclement winter weather often prevents regular donors from giving this time of year, making donations even more important, officials said.

Blood from a donor with a similar ethnic background as that of the patient is less likely to cause complications, particularly for those patients whose chronic conditions require repeated transfusions. Sickle cell disease is one such chronic condition affecting as many as 100,000 people in the United States.

To learn more and to schedule an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767.