

## Hive

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PHOTOS BY DON PHAM/NORTHWEST VIETNAMESE NEWS



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Bellevue Mayor Conrad Lee addressed ethnic media at the Sea Beez Best Business Practices Roundtable. At left companies from around the region talked about their strategies for developing their internet operations.

United States. Pham is also managing editor of the Northwest Vietnamese News in Seattle.

“I work at a Vietnamese newspaper and we’re a small business — we can’t serve our readers if we don’t survive as small

businesses,” Pham says.

“There are organizations that aggregate news and try to share content, but what

makes Sea Beez different is about capacity — training and workshops aimed at letting ethnic media get better at their craft.”

## Syphilis

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screening or that they will recognize the rash.”

Syphilis causes a broad range of symptoms that can make it hard to diagnose, particularly for providers who don’t see a lot of patients with syphilis. Importantly, syphilis is caused by a bacterial infection and is curable with antibiotics.

Shortly after infection, syphilis causes an

**Public health officials say they don’t fully understand what is causing the upswing in cases**

ulcer on the genitals, anus or mouth. However, the ulcers often go unnoticed because they are painless or in areas of the body that aren’t easily seen. After the sore heals, syphilis causes a body rash that can include the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. This, too, can go unnoticed by men and their medical providers.

Once the rash resolves, men have no symptoms but are still infected and are still at risk for severe medical consequences, including vision loss, loss of hearing and stroke. Among recent cases, at least six persons have suffered some loss of vision, though most affected persons’ symptoms improved with treatment.

Condoms can prevent the spread of syphilis. However, many men are unaware that syphilis can be spread through oral sex.

The Public Health HIV/STD Program advises that all sexually active men who have sex with men should be routinely tested for STDs, including syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and HIV. All men who have sex with men should be tested annually, and men with higher risk should be tested once every three months. Since syphilis increases the risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV infection, anyone diagnosed with syphilis should be tested for HIV.

STD testing is available in primary care medical providers’ offices, Gay City Wellness Center, the King County STD Clinic, and other public health clinics. For more information, please visit the Public Health — Seattle & King County HIV/STD Program website at [www.kingcounty.gov/health/std](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/std).

**‘We need medical providers to test their gay and bisexual patients for syphilis often and to be vigilant in looking for signs of the infection’**

— *Dr. Matthew Golden, director of the Public Health-Seattle & King County HIV/STD Program*

## Death

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abouts of all employees; improve the current radio system; test a proximity card system to track staff locations; develop a standardized system for proximity cards, body alarms and video surveillance to present to the Legislature; train supervisors on enhanced security awareness to combat

**Corrections union worried the state’s \$5 billion budget deficit will delay safety improvements that cost money**

complacency; and temporarily reduce overcrowding in prisons, including an end to double-bunking at the Washington State Reformatory.

The state faces big budget deficits, but the Department of Corrections will work with legislators to implement the recommendations, Vail said. Corrections took some

immediate actions after Biendl’s death to improve safety, he said.

Tracey Thompson, secretary of Teamsters Local 117, which represents corrections officers, said the report recommendations are a good start. “But there is no mechanism that they will be implemented,” she said.

Thompson also worried the state’s \$5 billion budget deficit will delay safety improvements that cost money.

“We’re not very optimistic about what the end result will be,” she said.

The report said the lack of personal body alarms meant staff must rely on radio, telephone or shouting if they need assistance. Biendl had a radio, which was destroyed in the struggle.

“We recommend the installation of a personal body alarm system that when activated, automatically alerts the institution main control room,” providing the officer’s name and location, the report said.

In the Biendl case, the first indication something was wrong came around 9:15 p.m., during a prisoner head count. The count found one prisoner missing, and Scherf was located minutes later in the chapel lobby. He told officers he had

planned to escape but changed his mind.

It wasn’t until 10:18 p.m. that Biendl’s body was found on a stage in the chapel, after officers realized she hadn’t turned in her radio and handcuffs at the end of her shift.

Custody staff should be issued pepper spray to help deal with violent confrontations with inmates, the report said. They are currently unarmed.

The report said there were 215 corrections officers for 780 inmates at the reformatory, which is considered adequate staff.

Single officer posts like the one Biendl was assigned are common in prison systems, and the inherent risks can be significantly reduced by use of controlled group movements of inmates, the report said.

“The predatory inmate plans for opportunities to get a staff member alone in an isolated area,” the report said.

Court documents quoted Scherf saying he waited for everyone to leave the prison chapel and then strangled her. The report

also noted that Scherf was a volunteer clerk in the chapel, but no one knew how he got the job.

The institute said Corrections should review whether violent inmates and those serving life without parole should have access to certain areas in the prison.

**Court documents quoted the attacker saying he waited for everyone to leave the prison chapel and then strangled her**

Vail said some recommendations can be put in place now, while others need further research and legislative funding. The agency will arm some corrections officers with pepper spray, he said.

The institute is part of the U.S. Department of Justice and provides training and technical assistance to federal, state and local corrections agencies.