



THE SKANNER™

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



Benefits Cut for Moms?

Low-income mothers in Washington may lose dental coverage

By Traci Tate
UW News Lab

Washington legislators could take Medicaid dental benefits away from more than 30,000 low-income pregnant women later this month as part of a plan to balance the state budget, according to the Washington Dental Service Foundation.

The foundation issued a statement last week charging that such a decision could lead to even higher dental costs in the future and poorer health for mothers and their children.

“The state Legislature will consider a long list of difficult cuts, including the elimination of all non-emergency dental care for low-income pregnant women,” said Diane Riter, program manager with WDSF, in a statement. “While policymakers will have few easy choices, this drastic cut would eventually make care even more expensive since it delays inexpensive preventive care along with restorative care for pregnant women on Medicaid, increasing the severity of their dental disease and the risk that their children will develop tooth decay.”

When moms have good oral health their children also benefit, Riter said. Even though dental decay is preventable, it is the No. 1 chronic disease among children, [according to a study cited in the press release].

“Prenatal care is emerging as a powerful, cost-effective weapon to fight this disease,” Riter added. “The Washington Dental Service Foundation finds that when pregnant mothers receive regular dental care, including preventive care, they pass less cavity-causing bacteria to their babies through saliva when they share food or utensils. This lowers the chances their children will struggle with dental disease, which in turn reduces Medicaid treatment costs.”

In 2009, Medicaid spent more than \$55

See **BENEFITS** on page 3

PEPPERED HERO



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Dorli Rainey, the longtime Seattle activist who has become the face of the Occupy Movement for getting pepper sprayed in the face by Seattle police, was greeted as a hero Saturday, Nov. 19, by a crowd at Westlake Center. She was the keynote speaker at Occupy Seattle's Voices of the Revolution Rally.

Juveniles Held at Coffee Creek

Effort to keep teens out of adult jails expands to intake process

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Do you know a teenager who has been processed for incarceration through the adult Coffee Creek Correctional Facility?

The nonprofit Partnership for Safety and Justice wants to know how juveniles are being treated there, as part of a research project to bolster new legislation keeping youths out of adult jails.

Youth advocates cite research

showing that teens incarcerated in adult jails are at increased risk for physical and sexual assault, and when held in isolation can face an increased risk of suicide and attempted suicide.

“The consequences of juveniles in adult prisons are very serious and that’s why we at Partnership for Safety and Justice are working to address that issue,” says the group’s associate director Shannon White.

The Partnership is a nonprofit

group working on prison reform issues in Oregon. It is supported by members who have direct experience in the criminal justice system, particularly families of incarcerated and formerly-jailed offenders.

During the last legislative session the Partnership helped pass HB 2707, which helps to keep youth who are charged as adults out of jail, pretrial.

“Research shows kids who have contact with the adult criminal justice system are much less likely to be successful

when they get out than youth who are kept in the juvenile justice system,” White says.

While Coffee Creek Correctional Facility is considered to be the state’s women’s prison, it also serves as the processing center for newly-convicted male offenders.

Youth who are charged and convicted as adults often — even if they’re going to serve their sentence in an Oregon youth authority facility — can

See **JAILS** on page 8

INDEX	
News	2,3,6,8,10,11
Opinion	4,5
A & E	7
Healthy Food.....	9
Bids/Classifieds	11

Federal Drug Strategy Pushes Treatment

Drug Czar says new policy intended to treat addiction as an illness

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

About 20 million U.S. adults, more than one in 10 of us, regularly use illegal drugs. And for years, the War on Drugs has sent millions of drug users, growers and sellers to prison, branded as felons. The toll on communities of color has been steep, with African Americans and

Hispanics incarcerated for drug offenses at a rate 50 percent higher than for Whites.

Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske says the administration’s new drug policies will usher in a more enlightened public health approach, based on science and what we know works. So what’s different?

“This new way of thinking is focused on breaking the cycle of drug abuse, crime and incarceration,” Kerlikowske told reporters

Monday.

“Recognizing that addiction is a disease and not a moral failure or a failure to find God, that people can and do recover by the tens of thousands, and they can be off our tax dollars and back with their families.”

The National Drug Control Strategy for 2011 calls for widespread changes in polic-

See **TREATMENT** on page 3