

Get Insured Now

Enroll by Feb. 15 or face Care Act fines

Lisa Loving
Of *The Skanner News*

Open enrollment for health insurance, required under the Affordable Care Act, ends Feb 15, and it looks like the system is working much more smoothly than it did last year.

People who miss signing up now will face the first wave of fines starting in 2016.

In Oregon, anyone who has not signed up should go to [www. HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov); in Washington go to www.wahealthplanfinder.org. So far Oregon officials say an additional 97,489 people signed up this cycle – a major improvement from the state’s rocky Obamacare launch last year.

Oregon’s ACA signups have been taken over by the federal government, which sent out this week’s press releases about sign-ups and tax credits.

In Washington, Gov. Jay Inslee and the Washington Health Benefit Exchange say customers “must select and pay for a Qualified Health Plan by Feb. 15 at 9:59 p.m. for coverage that begins on March 1, 2015.”

“On a national level, Washington State continues to have one of the highest reductions in its uninsured rate,” said Gov. Jay Inslee this week. “This shows that the Affordable Care Act is working and Washingtonians are benefiting from free or low-cost health insurance options.”

If you don’t sign up in 2015, next year you face Internal Revenue Service fines of \$325 per person or up to 2 percent of your annual income, whichever is greater.

“This means that the penalty for a family of four with an annual income of \$60,000 will total approximately \$1,000 next year,” Healthplanfinder warns.

An estimated 139,000 people are now signed up in the Emerald State, with 640,000 enrolled in a Qualified Health Plan or under Medicaid expansion through Washington Healthplanfinder.

Cover Oregon officials say as of Jan. 18, a total of 85,706 Oregon residents had signed up for private plans, a 44 percent increase

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HONORED



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, hip hop recording artist Drazé, and Eddie Rye Jr. pose for a picture at the 2nd Annual Through The Eyes of Art at EMP on Saturday, Feb. 7. Rye was the 2015 recipient of the Servant of the People Award at the Experience Music Project Museum's Black History Month kick-off event, which also included a keynote address by former World Vision National Director of Youth Engagement Derrick Wheeler Smith, a short speech by Mayor Murray, and live performances by Talib Kweli, and Drazé.

Child Poverty Growing in Portland

United Way retools efforts by reorganizing focus to four issue areas

By Helen Silvis
Special To *The Skanner News*

A year into his new job at United Way of the Columbia Willamette, CEO Keith Thomajan was at a crossroads. Listening to his staff and board, Thomajan had heard their hunger for real change. At the same time, reports on family poverty in Multnomah County showed the problems were persistent.

“Nearly half of the kids in our

region are growing up in desperately low-income families,” Thomajan says.

“On a daily basis they are making choices between food and rent. That was staggering to me.”

United Way staff knew they had been funding some excellent work, but they wanted to do more. They wanted to break the cycle of poverty that sees children who are born poor stay poor.”

“Despite our long history of doing good, we saw that our

kids and families in poverty were falling farther and farther behind,” Thomajan says. “And when we looked at the data by race, we saw profound and savage inequalities for communities of color.”

United Way of the Columbia Willamette estimates child poverty rose by 65 percent across its service area: Clark, Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. That means about 100,000 children in our region live in poverty.

Founded 125 years ago, Unit-

ed Way is made up of dozens of local groups which each set their own funding priorities. Taken together, these local groups form the largest nonprofit in the world, pulling in donations of more than \$5 billion a year.

Locally United Way of the Columbia Willamette brought in \$21.6 million last year. Donors earmarked just over \$12 million for their favorite charities. The rest will go to the nonprofit’s

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Rape’s Other Victims: The Children

Deep feelings of inadequacy plague those born from assault

By Jazelle Hunt
NNPA Washington Correspondent

SECOND IN A SERIES

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – The first time Tiffany Perry learned about her conception, she was too innocent to fully understand the gentle explanation her mother was offering, too young to process such a heavy and com-

plicated behavior.

What she distinctly remembers is watching “Oprah” with her mom a few years later, as a 10-year-old. It was the television episode in which Oprah revealed to the world that she was a rape survivor.

“When [Oprah] said herself, and started crying...my mom just fell apart,” the 39-year-old Jersey City, N.J. native recounted. “I tried to console her, but she was incon-

solable. It was just so intense.”

At 15 years old, Perry’s mother was raped by her foster mother’s 21-year-old married son. His wife had invited Perry’s mother into their home to babysit their child and to escape her foster mother’s wrath.

Her foster brother raped her repeatedly for two weeks, sometimes at knifepoint.

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