

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Interview: Portland Physician on Coronavirus Vaccine, Reaching Out to Wary Communities

Black Americans report highest levels of distrust as country distributes millions of Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines

By **Saundra Sorenson**
Of *The Skanner News*

With more than 1,600 Oregonians having lost their lives to coronavirus, and 124,000 cases reported within the state, the delivery of two FDA-approved vaccinations gives hope for widespread inoculation and an eventual return to normalcy. But experts are concerned that misinformation and misunderstanding about the vaccinations will undermine public health efforts to protect from a virus that as of Friday had infected 22 million Americans and claimed the lives of 367,000 – especially within the Black community, the hardest



Dr. Carl Anderson

hit by the pandemic and statistically, the most skeptical of it. While Black Americans are dying of coronavirus at a rate of two-and-a-half times that of White Americans, fewer than half of Black American adults intend to get the vaccine, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center. There is significant distrust “in the Black and also in the Latinx and the Asian Pacific communities, simply because

their experiences with Western medicine, at least in the US, has not always been trustworthy,” Dr. Carl Anderson, a local physician, told *The Skanner*. Anderson served as a preventative medicine physician in the U.S. Army Reserve for nine years, and was deployed as a preventive medicine officer in Kuwait in 2012, where he tracked the SARS-like virus during Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2016, he served as acting chief of preventive medicine at Fort Sill, Okla., monitoring mosquito species capable of carrying the Zika virus. He sat down with *The Skanner* to clear up confusion about the vaccination. **Two Vaccines Approved** The two vaccinations currently approved by the FDA are by Pfizer and Moderna, with each company under contract to reserve their first 100 million vaccine doses

for the U.S. government, which is distributing doses in a taxpayer-funded effort. A third, the AstraZeneca vaccine, is currently under review in the U.S., with OHSU conducting a clinical trial of at least 13,000 volunteers. So far, 6.7 million Americans – about 2% of the population – have received their first dose of the vaccine, which requires two shots spaced out over three weeks to a month. Vaccinations are currently being administered with the most at-risk populations being prioritized, including health care providers, hospital workers, elderly care facility staff and residents, and anyone over the age of 80. President-elect Joe Biden this week announced his goal of distributing 100 million vaccinations during his first 100 days in office. On Friday, he announced he would free up all avail-

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– Martin Luther King, Jr.



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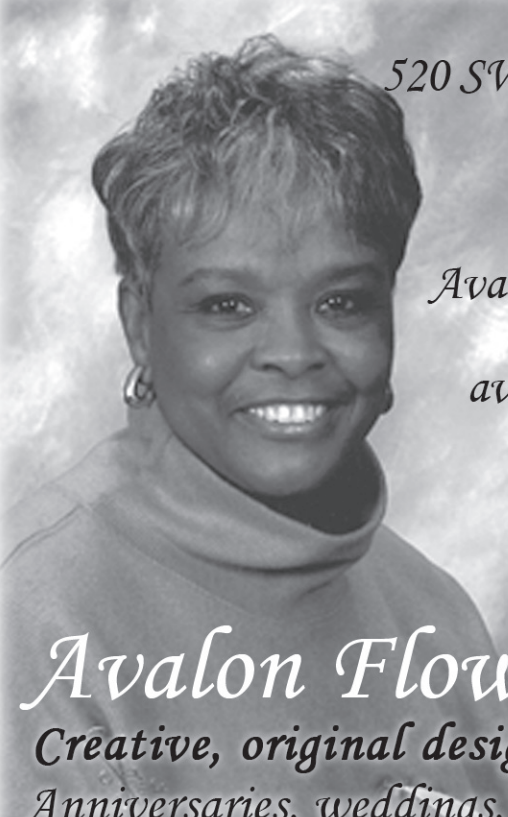
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