

Car seat technicians help parents

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — New parents may feel like they need an engineering degree to figure out their child's car seat, but there is plenty of help available for navigating the straps and buckles.



Contributed photo by Kim Fetrow
Emily Smith waits for people to visit the free car seat checks that St. Anthony Hospital conducts once a month at the Walmart parking lot in Pendleton.

Umatilla Morrow County Head Start, Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston and St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton all have certified car seat technicians happy to do a free check for anyone worried they might not be buckling a child in correctly.

Amy Hendrix, health and nutrition director for UMCHS, said even a member of Head Start's own staff came in with a car seat installed "vey incorrectly."

"It doesn't matter your education level — car seats are complicated," she said.

They offer car seat and booster seat checks Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Hermiston office and Pendleton WIC office, as well as by appointment in Milton-Freewater.

Maria Arroyo, one of the certified technicians, said one of the biggest problems she sees is car seats installed

child in correctly, Arroyo said she also teaches them how to make adjustments as their child grows, and when they will require a new seat.

Oregon law requires children over 40 pounds to use a booster seat until age 8 or growing to 4 feet, 9 inches tall. But Arroyo recommends keeping them in the booster seat after age 8 if they haven't hit the height requirement yet.

Parents can be ticketed in Washington for allowing their child under age 13 to sit in the front passenger seat. While Oregon does not have an age limit for sitting in the front, experts recommend that children under 13 remain in the back.

Hendrix said she can personally testify to the effectiveness of a properly installed car seat, after she got in a crash years ago with her 3-year-old daughter strapped in.

"The car was totaled, but my youngest daughter was in a car seat and she didn't even cry, she was so protected," Hendrix said.

Car seats expire after six to 10 years of use, and should be replaced if they are in a serious crash.

"There can be hairline cracks the eye can't see," Arroyo said.

UMCHS recognizes that not everyone can afford to pay for a car seat, which is why they also offer car seats for \$10 to \$30 for low-income families who receive benefits such as WIC or SNAP, or have been referred through agencies such as Domestic Violence Services. Call 541-564-6878 for more information.

St. Anthony Hospital also offers discounted booster and car seats for those in need, as well as monthly installation clinics, which usually take place on the last Wednesday of the month in the Pendleton Walmart parking lot. People can also call 541-278-2627 to set up a private appointment.

Emily Smith, a car seat technician for St. Anthony, said every time someone stops by the clinics, there is almost always something that needs adjusted. Sometimes the harness is on wrong or the tether isn't being used correctly. Other times the child might be too big or too small for the seat.

"I'd say out of every 10 car seats we see come through the clinic, only one or two is installed correctly," she said. "Often it's little things, but there's usually something we can do to make the kiddo safer."

BRIEFLY

Conrad Skinner Veterans Memorial Appreciation Dinner draws crowd

HERMISTON — The Conrad Skinner Veterans Memorial Appreciation Dinner attracted about 280 people, including 81 veterans, according to organizers Ron Hosek and Sue Long-Hosek.

The event on Sunday in the Hermiston Community Center was free to veterans, their families and community members who wished to express appreciation. Speakers included state Sen. Bill Hansell and representatives from Rep. Greg Walden and Sen. John Merkley's office.

During the dinner, organizers announced a special coffee hour for veterans on Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at Sun Terrace, 1550 N.W. 11th St. in Hermiston.

Hosek said the idea for the coffee hour, known as Dave's Journey, came from a fundraising golf tournament he and Long-Hosek hosted last year. After the tournament, some veterans started talking about their experiences in the service with each other and ended up staying past midnight.

Long-Hosek said they hope to replicate that bonding experience at the December event and future coffee hours. She also said she hopes to get a similar program going for family members of veterans to share their experiences with each other.

For more information or to get involved, call Long-Hosek at 509-989-0066.

Good Shepherd Health Care System to hold community meeting

HERMISTON — Good Shepherd Health Care System is holding its second annual community meeting next week.

The event takes place Wednesday in the Hermiston High School commons and auditorium from 5-8 p.m. The event will include a health fair with free flu shots, educational booths, food, prizes and more from 5-6 p.m.

The keynote speaker at 6 p.m. is Marcus Engel, a national speaker, adjunct professor at the University of Notre Dame and the author of five books, including "The Other End of the Stethoscope," which is the title of his presentation. Engel shares his insights on improving patient care, gleaned from his experiences after being blinded and nearly killed by a drunken driver while in college.

After Engel's remarks, Good Shepherd CEO Dennis Burke will present the hospital's annual report.

To attend the free event, RSVP to 541-667-3509 or register online at gshcsannualcommunitymeeting.eventbrite.com.

Good Shepherd implementing health plan

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HERMISTON — Good Shepherd Health Care System is working to implement new programs and practices based on data gathered through a county-wide survey on health.

Good Shepherd and St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton teamed up to survey Umatilla County residents about topics ranging from drug use to diabetes. More than 750 surveys about adults and children in English and Spanish were returned. The hospitals and other area health organizations have used that information this year to each put together their own "community health improvement plan."

"The goal is to work together," said Juli Gregory, director of education for Good Shepherd. "We want everyone's health to improve."

She and community health educator Jessica Reker presented Good Shepherd's CHIP to the Healthy Communities Coalition on Wednesday. Based on the biggest areas of concern in the survey results, the focus for the plan is on health equity, access to services, obesity, chronic disease, violence and behavioral health.

Reker said 71% of adults surveyed said they have left Umatilla County to seek medical care. Other issues

surrounding access to care included high numbers of adults reporting they did not have insurance, and/or had visited the emergency room for something that could have been taken care of in a more cost-effective setting.

Good Shepherd plans to increase its efforts to educate people about when it is appropriate to seek care at an emergency room, urgent care clinic or primary care provider. Reker said they will also continue to recruit new physicians to be able to serve more people in the county, and make urgent care more available.

"We can expand hours," she said.

They will also implement "health literacy and cultural humility" trainings for staff, after only 72% of adults on the English survey and 53% of adults on the Spanish survey said their provider explained things in a way they can understand.

Many of the steps Good Shepherd is taking involve increased community education through free classes, informational booths, promotional materials and other steps. For example, the community health survey found that 58% of adults and 47% of children drank at least one sugar-sweetened beverage, such as soda, per day. Gregory said in response the hospital has created a display on the

health effects of sugary drinks and is bringing it to community education events.

"It's been a wow moment," she said. "It's visually very powerful when you realize how much sugar is in one of these drinks."

The hospital also plans to mail vouchers to community members for A1c/Lipid screenings, and create a community-wide strategic plan for cancer prevention.

Reker said the hospital will step up its efforts on the "Start by Believing" public education campaign on sexual assault after 8% of adults on the English survey and 14% surveyed in Spanish said they had been forced to have sexual intercourse against their will at some point in their life. They will also integrate questions about violence and sexual abuse into their intake processes.

Reker said 17% of adults surveyed in Umatilla County self-reported misusing prescription medications, either by taking medicines not prescribed to them or using them with the sole intent to get high. The hospital will work to "ensure uniform compliance" with its prescription policies, she said.

As part of the community health improvement plan, Good Shepherd recently set up a prescription medication disposal box at its pharmacy.

Staff are also being trained to administer Naloxone, which reverses the effects of an opioid overdose, and the hospital recently held a training that was open to the community.

"That was well received, and we plan to do it again," Gregory said.

The full community health improvement plan can be found online at http://www.gshealth.org/wp-content/uploads/gschf-cap_2019.pdf. The results of the community survey can be found at http://www.gshealth.org/wp-content/uploads/Umatilla_County_CHA_7-26-19.pdf.



Halloween makeup

Brooklyn Zacharias, 11, applies Halloween-themed makeup during a Halloween-themed makeup workshop at the Pendleton Public Library on Wednesday afternoon.

Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Passenger Rail Public Forum

Community Room,
Cook Memorial Library, La Grande
10 am to 2 pm, Saturday, October 26

The public is encouraged to attend to learn about returning rail passenger service to Umatilla County, the benefits of passenger trains, and to voice their preference for the type of service offered with the goal of creating a local advocacy group in Eastern Oregon.

Sponsored by the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA).
For more information: (817) 480-5385



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