

# Making the right choices the easy choices

By Kenneth Rose and  
Emily Sheahan  
For The Chieftain

Wallowa Memorial Hospital has been focusing on the health and wellness of our community over the past few years in part by providing the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP), and now by focusing on helping our community become a "Blue Zone." Dan Buettner is a world renowned explorer and author who has written several books on the "Blue Zones," the focus in a National Geographic article that described the five Blue Zones around the world where there are more people who are living active lives well into their 100s.

Buettner subsequently has done a lot of research into what were some commonalities between the lifestyle habits of these five Blue Zones. He found nine common hab-



Courtesy photo

Dr. Kenneth D. Rose

its or practices called the "Power Nine," which include moving naturally, having a purpose, eating a plant-slant diet and having strong

social ties.

In his most recent book, "Blue Zone Solutions," he shares how they have incorporated the nine practices into communities across the United States in order to help people live longer and healthier lives.

"It's not just how long we live, it's also how well we live," Buettner writes. "People in the Blue Zones cultures not only live longer lives, they often live better lives, with health, meaning and love — dying young as old as possible."

Buettner emphasizes that the majority of those living over 100 years in these Blue Zones are not trying to do so, they just do it because their cultures are such that "the healthy choice is the easy choice. ... The path to a long, healthy life comes from creating an environment around yourself, your family and your community that nudges you into following the right behaviors

subtly and relentlessly ..."

If Americans could follow the examples of the people in the Blue Zones they could lose an average of 20 pounds, cut their rates of heart disease in half and suffer about a fifth the rate of diabetes and certain cancers. With those kinds of health benefits, who wouldn't want to live in that kind of environment?

On Feb. 9 a team from the Oregon Blue Zones Project shared a presentation at Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise.

To become a Blue Zone, a community must involve individuals, city departments, businesses, grocery stores and restaurants in pledging to make changes to what we eat, how we exercise and relate to one another. A Blue Zone community requires a pledge and action from 20 percent of citizens, 50 percent of top 20 employers, 25 percent of independent restaurants, 25 percent

of public schools and 25 percent of grocery stores. The pledge includes a checklist of lifestyle changes, community and business projects, as well as menu and product changes to promote healthier lifestyles.

As health care practitioners, we are excited to take part in continuing to help our community make healthy choices for a longer and healthier life. This is an exciting opportunity for our community and we are hoping that individuals, businesses and schools will join the movement. We encourage you to go to the Blue Zone website ([www.bluezonesproject.com](http://www.bluezonesproject.com)) and learn more about how each of us can get involved.

*Kenneth D. Rose, MD, is a general surgeon at Mountain View Medical Group in Enterprise. Dr. Emily Sheahan, MD is Family Medicine/Obstetrics specialist at Mountain View Medical Group.*

## Spring community Health Worker training available

Course will ready trainees to help residents with health care services

Wallowa County Chieftain

Do you have a passion for your community? Would you like to increase your skills and become part of a new workforce? Northeast Oregon Network (NEON) can

help you do just that with upcoming Community Health Worker training sessions in La Grande.

Community Health Workers are a community-based resource that works with individual community members and the community as a whole to help navigate the health care and social service systems to improve lives in their area.

You'll find certified Community Health Workers at many Wallowa County businesses that deal with the pub-

lic, such as insurance companies, service agencies like Community Connection and Building Healthy families, Winding Waters and Center for Wellness.

Ideal places to add CHW's would be schools, justice agencies, youth services, Department of Human Services, dentist offices, churches, hospitals and care centers. Anyone who wants to learn more is welcome to attend the training.

The training consists of 90 hours of class time and NEON is the only certified hands-on program on the eastern side of the state that can offer the program and certification.

This spring's training course will run from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. April 11-14, April 25-28 and May 9-12. There will be a 30-minute break each day for lunch, which will be provided by NEON. The training will take place at the Integrated Services Building, 1607 Gekler Lane in La Grande.

The NEON CHW training prepares trainees to play a full range of roles, from connecting people to existing services and managing medical utilization, health education to organizing communities to identify and address their own most pressing health issues; and to promote the full integration of CHWs as integral members of the medical, public health and

## Look for signs of canine Salmon Poisoning Disease

Licking an infected fish can kill a dog

By Dr. Jereld Rice  
For The Chieftain

Take a drive up the river on any given day and you'll see fishermen at every bend. Folks fishing alone, others with a friend or two, and those spending the day on the river with man's best friend — a faithful dog. Those of us who live in the Pacific Northwest and have a dog we love, weather we fish or not, must know about the life-threatening disease known as "salmon poisoning."

Every year, thousands of dogs in our corner of the country become severely ill after ingesting raw, cold-smoked or kippered fish. As the name implies, salmon play a key role in this disease that can infect any member of the canine species.

However, other fish, such as trout, steelhead, lamprey, sculpin and others also can transmit the infectious, bacterial, disease-causing organism.

Dogs that are exposed to the pathogen can become deathly ill by eating (or even just licking) any part of an infected fish. Though not all fish will carry the infectious organism, there is no obvious way to know which fish will transmit the disease and which ones won't.

Clinical signs (or symptoms) of salmon poisoning are remarkably similar to a

number of other canine diseases, such as parvo, distemper, ehrlichiosis and some types of toxicities or poisoning. Infected dogs typically don't show signs of disease for up to 5-7 days (and sometimes as many as 30 days) after eating the infected fish, which can make salmon poisoning a diagnostic challenge.

The first sign of salmon poisoning is a mild elevation in temperature followed by loss of appetite, lethargy and a fever that may get as high as 107 degrees.

If the dog does not die from the extreme body temperature, clinical signs or symptoms will continue to develop.

By the fourth or fifth day after clinical signs develop, body temperature often will decrease and may even be within the normal range (though it is a false "normal" resulting from dehydration). Dogs that have salmon poisoning disease will start to vomit, appear to have sunken eyes from dehydration, and diarrhea will become profuse and is often times bloody.

As vomiting and diarrhea persist, dogs become severely dehydrated and body temperature often falls well below normal. Of the dogs that do not receive veterinary care, 90 percent of affected dogs will die within 14 days of the onset of clinical signs.

Contrary to its name, Salmon Poisoning Disease is not caused directly by the fish itself, but rather by a microscopic organism known as *Neorickettsia helmintheca*

that is found in a microscopic fish fluke named *Nanophyetus Salmincola*. When a dog eats (or possibly even licks) an infected fish and ingests the infected fluke, it also becomes infected. The *Neorickettsia* organism infects the lymph nodes and causes severe intestinal inflammation, resulting in an immune response that triggers extreme fever, profuse diarrhea and severe vomiting.

Prognosis for dogs that are diagnosed with salmon poisoning is dependent on how far the disease has progressed. Dogs that are presented to a veterinarian early in the course of disease may be given a very optimistic prognosis, while dogs that have more advanced disease may be given a poor to grave prognosis.

Treating salmon poisoning can be relatively simple or exceptionally challenging depending on how far the disease has progressed. Dogs that have been displaying clinical signs for several days are generally severely dehydrated and require IV fluid therapy to restore hydration. Additional therapy is aimed at eliminating the *Neorickettsia* organism, stopping the vomiting and supporting the digestive system as it heals. Most dogs that show clinical signs of salmon poisoning require hospitalization.

The best treatment is prevention:

- Keep close track of where your dog is and what he is eating will help your dog avoid the perils of salmon poisoning.

- Wrap garbage, especially fish entrails, and dispose of in well-secured trash cans.

- If you do feed fish to your dog, ensure that it has been well cooked or deep freeze it for a minimum of two weeks to destroy the disease causing agent prior to feeding it to your dog.

- When you are fishing, keep dogs well away from raw fish.

Ignoring your dog's whine as he begs for a morsel of fresh fish may save both of you a heap of trouble and even a life.

*Jereld Rice, DVM, owns and operates Enterprise Animal Hospital.*

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