

Tribal member prescription benefit change on Feb. 1

Based on the recommendation of the Healthcare Task Force, Tribal Council has approved beginning Feb. 1 that all Tribal members utilizing the Skookum Health Plan obtain their maintenance medications from a mail-order facility approved by the plan.

There are two facilities to choose from: Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Pharmacy and The Express Scripts mail-order pharmacy.

Any medication filled every month — most likely for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, allergies, long-term pain management, etc. — will now need to be filled by one of the two pharmacies.

Medications taken for acute symptoms, such as infections, short-term pain management, etc., will be able to be filled at your local pharmacy.

This plan change will save the Tribe approximately \$900,000 per year.

The Grand Ronde Pharmacy receives discounts from Indian Health Service to serve Native Americans. These discounts are generally 60 percent less than what the health plan has to pay for prescriptions to be filled at your local pharmacy for the same medication, and results in a huge savings for the Tribe.

In addition, as a convenience for you, prescriptions filled through mail order will be dispensed at a 90-day supply if that is what your provider writes. This will be the case regardless of which mail-order facility is chosen.

Tribal members utilizing the Health & Wellness Clinic Pharmacy will have their co-pay waived regardless of their location and can either choose to have the prescription mailed or picked up in person.

In preparation for this change, we are asking that Tribal members not already utilizing the Grand Ronde Pharmacy have their prescriptions transferred from their local pharmacy.

Please contact the Tribal Pharmacy at 503-879-2342, option 1 and then option 0, as soon as possible so Tribal staff can assist you with this process and you can be assured that you do not run out of medication. Once we have transferred or received a new prescription, we will have your prescription in the mail within 24 hours.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Pharmacy staff at the phone number above or Pharmacy Director Julie Davis at 503-879-2342 (option 3). ■

Saying farewell



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Vernon Kennedy, right, talks with Darlene Aaron, left, Tribal member and the Tribe's health promotion specialist, and Tribal Vice Chair Reyn Leno during a retirement gathering for him at the Health & Wellness Center on Wednesday, Dec. 30. Kennedy retired on Jan. 4 after 20 years and 9 months of service to the Tribe as the Tribe's prevention education counselor.

CULTURAL GATHERINGS

■ JAN. 23: **ANNUAL TRADITIONAL WINTER POWWOW.** Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus, 12000 S.W. 46th Ave. **PORTLAND, OR.** 503-977-4112.

■ FEB. 6: **ELMIRA POWWOW.** 24936 N.E. Fir Grove Lane. **ELMIRA, OR.** 541-461-2882 or amerrill@lesd.k12.or.us.

If you or anyone you know has information on cultural events happening, Smoke Signals would be glad to list it in our Cultural Gatherings. Please e-mail news@grandronde.org or write to Smoke Signals, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347.

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January 30, 2010

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