



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Dr. Lance Loberg is Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center's new medical director.

Loberg named medical director of Tribal clinic

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

If the Tribe wanted a doctor with compassion, dedication and a willingness to devote an entire career to underserved populations in Oregon, the Grand Ronde Health and Wellness Clinic found one in Lance Loberg.

At Salem Hospital and community branches of the facility, now part of an umbrella organization called Salem Health, Loberg, 61, was for five years an obstetrics specialist. The program he worked in – Family Birth Center – served those without health insurance.

He saw patients with diabetes and provided family services for those who were pregnant. Two-thirds were Spanish speaking and the majority included higher risk patients. One quarter of patients were diabetic.

Before that for 20 years, he worked with migrant and family health centers. Four of those years were with the free clinic of the Salud Medical Center in Woodburn, and for 17 years he was at Northwest Human Services in Salem, also a facility serving patients without insurance.

Two years ago, Salem Health's Birth Center operations changed. The clinic closed and referred underserved patients to Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. Loberg stayed in Salem, working in urgent care with about a third of his time devoted to occupational medicine.

Recently, he started looking for other options, he said. His reputation led to an inquiry through the professional website LinkedIn, and that led him to Grand Ronde.

"When I first visited Grand Ronde, I liked everything here," he said. "All parts. It was more of what I was doing through most of my career. I thought it would let

me get back into things I'd done for most of my life."

Loberg's charge in Grand Ronde, since arriving at the end of July, is about a third administrative and two-thirds clinical, taking care of patients.

"Dr. Loberg comes to Grand Ronde with a tremendous amount of experience in family medicine," said Jeffrey Lorenz, executive director of Health Services for the Tribe. "He will be a welcome addition to our team."

As the department looks at scheduling and coverage and coordination of care across all health center departments, Loberg is "very willing to evaluate our systems and processes and work to improve them to help us meet the needs of our members and provide excellent patient care."

Loberg said that the department is "doing a good job; doing good work already," but he is holding regular provider meetings to focus on best practices. He also is making sure that clinic providers keep track of all problems of all patients with a "personal care" approach.

With his background in women's health care, Loberg intends to expand those services in Grand Ronde. The expanded services will give women birth control options and possibly pre-natal care.

To start, he says, "I'll provide these services. New providers may have this experience," Loberg said, "and as they perform this work, there won't be as much demand that I do it."

With two sons through college, and another along with two daughters still in high school, he said, with a little bit of humor, "I keep working to support them."

He is a gardener and a cyclist, and for music, he said, "It's mostly things my daughters listen to." ■

Control Your Diabetes. For life.

Please join the Community Health Program for our Diabetic Support Group at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 19. It is located at the Community Center in Grand Ronde and open to all community members. Adults only.

Call for more information: 503-879-2078
A healthy meal is provided following the meeting!

Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority



Home repair grants for Tribal homes

The Tribe, through the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority, offers Home Repair Grants to Tribally owned private homes for needed repairs, upgrades and maintenance.

If you own a home in Oregon and it needs a little help with things like a worn-out roof or a tired heating system, get in touch with your Tribal Housing Authority and see if you and your home qualifies. 503-879-2401.

Council adopted new amendments

ENROLLMENT continued from front page

handled fairly and without bias.

The council adopted these amendments under the emergency temporary enactment provisions of the Government Organization and Procedures Ordinance in early July. This ensures that the same process is applied to all involuntary loss of membership matters regardless of whether they are currently pending before the Tribal Council or Enrollment Committee. All pending disenrollment cases are now being remanded to the Enrollment Committee for a final decision as required by the Enrollment Ordinance.

Unfortunately, a number of false and misleading articles and statements have been published and appeared on social media regarding this entire process. We feel it is our duty to our membership and to members of the public to clarify that misinformation being disseminated by a few individuals.

Some of those statements falsely contend that individuals provisionally disenrolled by the Enrollment Committee have now lost their health care and housing benefits. That is simply false. Recognizing the importance of health care and housing, Tribal Council voted to allow individuals faced with involuntary loss of membership continued access to health care and housing throughout the appeal process. Prior to the amendments, individuals' benefits would have ceased immediately following a decision by Tribal Council to remove them from the rolls. Our empathy for these individuals led us to this extension of benefits.

Other statements implying that

members are being subjected to new enrollment criteria are also incorrect. And the numbers of individuals they claim have been disenrolled are also overstated. Out of 6,100 files reviewed, 14 members were disenrolled by Tribal Council (dual enrollment) in August 2013 and 86 members were remanded back to the Enrollment Committee by Tribal Council (lineal descent) in July 2014.

Additionally, statements implying individuals have been denied hearings before the committee or council are completely false. Countless hours of testimony from individuals facing disenrollment have been given before the committee and council over the course of many days and weeks.

The Tribal Council has diligently worked to remove these decisions from the influences of political process in a more appropriate way. We understand these are sensitive and difficult issues and want to ensure each case is handled fairly and without bias.

We want to remind our membership that there is a judicial process to appeal these decisions to Tribal Court and the Court of Appeals.

As elected officials, we took an oath of office to uphold our Tribal Constitution and the laws of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. In that same pledge, we swore that we would perform all duties required of us by the Constitution and the laws of the Tribe. For those reasons, we must move forward. This has not been an easy decision for Tribal Council. All of these issues have weighed heavily on each and every one of us. We cannot let any past errors override the clear language of our Constitution. ■

Elders' phone numbers wanted

The Tribal Elders Committee is compiling a volunteer phone list of Elders. If you would like to submit your phone number and address to be available to other Elders, send it to elders.committee@grandronde.org or leave a message at 503-879-2231. ■