

Some hope in improving child welfare in Oregon

The reports from the Department of Human Services Critical Incident Review Team are some of the most heartbreaking things that the state of Oregon produces.

The team reviews child fatalities when there is a connection to the state's child welfare department within a year of the death. The CIRT reports aim to understand what happened and consider what, if anything, can be learned.

A CIRT report from 2020 looked into what may have been a suicide or accidental overdose by a 16-year-old in December.

Rewind back to 2016. DHS received a report about the child. The child was then 12 and struggling with mental health and self harm. That investigation was closed because no evidence was found of parental abuse or neglect.

Then in December 2019, DHS received a report when the child was 15. The allegation: The child was struggling with suicide and it was not being adequately addressed by the parents. There was also information that the parents let the child drink at home.

The parents initially denied the caseworker access to the home. Later, the caseworker was able to meet with the parents and learned they were aware of the child's problems. The mother told the caseworker that the school had contacted her with concern about a social media post from the child in December 2019. The mother said she stayed home with the child to ensure the child's safety.

The family had no health insurance. They did have resources through the child's school to access counseling. The caseworker interviewed multiple other people including school staff, family members and the child's therapist. They did not report concerns. Based on the investigation, the allegations of neglect were ruled unfounded. The parents seemed to be taking

appropriate action. A year later the child was dead of suicide or accidental overdose.

In child abuse and neglect, there are often missed chances to intervene or help. It's hard to point fingers and know for certain what more could and should have been done in this case, at least from the detail in the report. It doesn't really answer that.

Some, perhaps most, child abuse is preventable. What can make a difference is giving families in need the support — economic, mental health and more — they need to stay together and prevent children from being harmed.

A twinkle of hope comes from the Family First Prevention Services Act. Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, a Democrat, worked on and got it passed in 2018. Child welfare advocates had long complained that the federal government was getting child welfare funding wrong. Federal money was available, though the majority of it was only available once a child was removed from a family. Shouldn't the government put more effort into giving families what they need to succeed? The Act enabled Oregon and other states to get reimbursed for services outside of foster care.

The state of Oregon just received permission from the federal government to move ahead with its version. That is very welcome news. Oregon's plan includes offering families programs for mental health, addiction and recovery, resources for pregnant and parenting teens and residential treatment requirements. Will it prevent more child abuse? We don't know. We hope so. There is more work to be done by Oregon's DHS to ensure it succeeds and that fewer CIRT reports must be written.

Bend moving forward on body cameras

Don't celebrate just yet, but the Bend Police Department should be another step closer this week to equipping its officers with body cameras.

The Bend City Council is scheduled to vote this week on a \$1 million, 5-year agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for body cameras, training and storage.

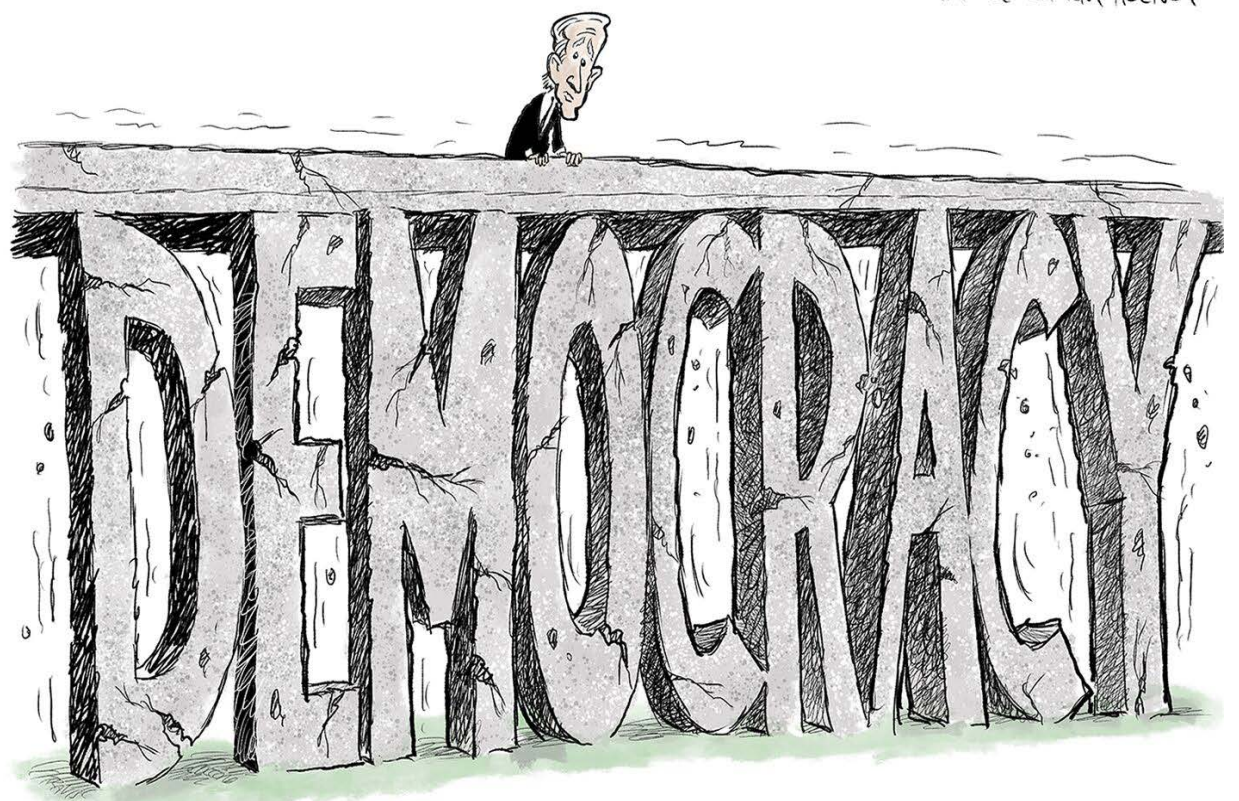
Redmond Police have already been using body cameras for about five years, so Bend is more of a follower than a leader. We're just

happy it is getting it done.

In all the disagreement and debate about how law enforcement should operate, body cameras is a topic where people agree. Cameras create transparency for the police and the public. They don't show everything, though they can be a critical tool in evaluating and monitoring law enforcement performance and the people they interact with.

We can't wait to see them implemented in Bend.

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.



AMERICA'S SHAKY INFRASTRUCTURE

How vaccines meant for a poor neighborhood might have ended up at Chicago's Trump Tower

BY MICHELINE MAYNARD

Special to The Washington Post

Toranzo Cannon's 2016 song about playing the blues ("I broke some rules / Paid some dues") is called "The Chicago Way." It has a nonchalance about sticking to protocols that would resonate with just about anyone in the Windy City.

As Sean Connery's character declared in "The Untouchables," "He pulls a knife, you pull a gun. He sends one of yours to the hospital, you send one of his to the morgue. That's the Chicago way."

In COVID-19 times, there's a new manifestation of the Chicago Way: vaccines as patronage.

Over the past few weeks, readers of Block Club Chicago, a scrappy news website, have been riveted by its reporting on Loretto Hospital, a 122-bed facility on the city's West Side. Tiny by big-city standards, Loretto serves a mostly Black and poor neighborhood.

You never hear much about Loretto, compared with Chicago's gleaming downtown medical facilities or Cook County Health, the sprawling public center where my mother worked in the country's first blood bank.

But it only makes sense, given its location, that Loretto's supply of coronavirus vaccines should have been distributed to West Side residents, who are among those hit hard by the virus and who have struggled to find shots.

Instead, to quote the song, Loretto broke some rules, and its neighbors were left singing the blues. More than once, I've gasped while reading Block Club's tales of the audacity at Loretto, later confirmed by fallout from the revelations.

On March 10, employees at Chicago's Trump Tower, miles east of Loretto, and in another economic strata, got vaccinated with shots from Lo-

retto, long before many of the recipients would have been eligible.

Then, it turned out that Cook County judges and their spouses also received some of Loretto's vaccines. So did staff at a luxury jewelry store and a steakhouse in the Gold Coast, one of the city's ritziest neighborhoods, as well as members of a suburban church and the family of a Loretto doctor.

How did this all happen? It's the ultimate illustration of another Chicago saying: "I know a guy who knows a guy."

All these places and people had connections to Loretto. The hospital's chief operating officer, physician Anosh Ahmed, lived in a Trump Tower condo. According to Block Club, he shopped at the jeweler and ate at the steak house.

Apparently, he decided that he'd take care of his friends, neighborhood needs aside.

Meanwhile, a doctor whose health system has ties to the hospital allegedly gave out shots to 10 relatives in January, when there were strict limits on who could receive vaccines.

Now, the collective game has been found out, and the consequences are being felt. Ahmed has resigned, and the chief executive at Loretto, George Miller, will be put on a two-week, unpaid suspension as soon as a replacement for Ahmed is found.

Residents on the West Side want Miller out. Chicago's mayor, Lori Lightfoot, has cut off fresh vaccine supplies to Loretto, meaning neighbors have to visit other sites to get their shots.

Lightfoot is calling for an independent investigation to figure out who got Loretto's shots.

Said the mayor, "They need to come clean about every instance in which vaccine has been committed to people that don't fit into that West

Side footprint."

For Lightfoot, the Loretto scandal is one more headache in what has been a terrible year in a city that's notoriously difficult to run.

Along with every economic and social dilemma that big-city mayors have faced in the pandemic, Chicago has been awash in a carjacking crime wave, and looting last summer forced the temporary shutdown of big swaths of downtown and even closed Lake Shore Drive.

To cut her a little break, Chicago isn't the only place where there's been COVID-19-related patronage. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, D, reportedly steered coronavirus tests to friends and family when swabbing was scarce. Wealthy Floridians who supported Gov. Ron DeSantis, R, supposedly received vaccines that should have gone to others.

But fighting for city residents is Lightfoot's responsibility, one that Loretto's higher-ups apparently felt they didn't share. That arrogance is the kind of thinking that the mayor has to stop, whether it's embedded in the "Chicago way" culture or not.

On Tuesday, Vice President Kamala Harris is visiting Chicago to focus on "vaccine equity" and to see a program the city says has helped boost vaccination rates from 18% to 50% among Black and Latino residents.

Along with touting the good news, the mayor needs to be open with Harris about the Loretto scandal as an example of the pitfalls that can hamper vaccination programs. Lightfoot can't simply lock it away like vaccine stored in a freezer. Otherwise, Loretto-style patronage is bound to be a temptation not just in Chicago, but elsewhere.

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With 'bleisure' time — mix of business and leisure — work moves to the beach

BY CONOR SEN
Bloomberg

The future of business travel is shaping up to be one of the big unanswered questions of the economic reopening. At the same time, many people are eagerly planning their first big post-pandemic family vacation — or vacations. And that's where "bleisure" comes in.

It may still be awhile before business travelers are packing convention halls in Manhattan and Chicago again. But our growing comfort with remote and flexible work arrangements may open up an even bigger category of travel that combines both business and leisure. Bleisure is one way we can take advantage of some of the new experience we've acquired over the past year in how to live and work.

Rather than a wholesale return to five days a week in the office, or a fully remote workplace, companies are more likely to settle on hybrid models — though what constitutes hybrid will be different from company to company. Moving to Florida to work remotely for a New York or

California-based company might be a solution for some but not for others. There's still value in being close to the office and co-workers, even if it's not necessarily every weekday.

Summer might be the time we see bigger changes in work-life balance, when schools are out and the office often moves at a slower pace as workers take vacations with their families. Rather than having to take time off to go to the beach or visit relatives, a greater acceptance of remote work makes a different type of summer travel possible.

Working outside the office for two or three weeks from a scenic destination on the water or in the mountains might be the post-pandemic normal for some white-collar professionals. It's the kind of extended visit or vacation that's traditionally been difficult to manage for office workers when they have only a limited number of paid days off.

United Airlines announced Thursday that they were expanding service to multiple destinations on the water in the eastern part of the U.S., anti-

padding that those types of places are going to see increased demand this year. The destinations — Charleston, Hilton Head and Myrtle Beach in South Carolina, plus Pensacola, Florida, and Portland, Maine — all will get direct routes from cities in the Midwest.

Thanks to our always-on-duty culture of smartphones and laptops, how to better manage the blending of work life and home life has been a topic of increasing concern in recent years. All the downsides that come when work encroaches on home and family time were even more apparent during the pandemic.

A shift to bleisure — working while on vacation — might in some ways be a continuation of that always-on dynamic, but at least it's one that would benefit workers for a change. If you're expected to always respond promptly to emails and phone calls, having the opportunity to do that from the Hamptons or Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, on a Tuesday in July or August beats having to do it after commuting home from the office.

It's also a great opportunity to give

retired grandparents more time with the grandkids while they help out their own children with babysitting during those Zoom calls and project deadlines.

And this means our idea of what constitutes business travel may change. No longer would it just be all about hotel points and frequently flier miles. Hotels will need internet connections fast enough to handle videoconferencing and large monitors that their guests can plug their laptops into.

Different kinds of accommodations will be needed for longer stays with multigenerational families. Beach towns may need their own co-working spaces — why not a WeWork in Hilton Head, South Carolina, or Key West, Florida? Rather than kids going to summer camps near their homes, there will be growing demand for camps in vacation spots as families move both their leisure and professional routines to communities that were previously focused entirely on recreation.

This type of experience won't be for everyone — renting accommodations for two or three weeks at a leisure des-

tinuation isn't cheap — but for well-paid white-collar professionals it's going to be much more common than it was pre-pandemic.

The rise of extended working vacations, enabled by technology and employers who are more comfortable with remote work, will be an enormous development opportunity for these communities. The Millennial generation is beginning to turn 40 and is ready to embrace this new way of spending time with their families. Many of the coastal districts now known for leisure and family vacations took off during the mid-20th century baby boom: Hilton Head's development as a tourist destination began in the 1950s, and Walt Disney announced plans to build Disney World in Orlando in the 1960s.

These communities weren't built overnight, and they won't become optimized for bleisure travel overnight. But it's something to watch as we try out new ways to work and live in a post-pandemic world.

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