

Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner



New employees at clinic

In September, two new staff members were hired at Providence Family Medicine-Vernonia:

Marla Rethwill has recently been hired as the new Patient Relations Representative, and will be working at the front desk. Marla is a five-plus year resident of Vernonia, and brings to the clinic years of office skills and experience, having worked in various offices where she has met with the public.

Marla graduated from Wasco County Union High School in Maupin, and attended Eastern Oregon University, where she met her husband, Scott. They came to Vernonia when Scott was hired by the City of Vernonia to work for the Public Works Department, a job which came about because of the flood of '96, but worked into a permanent job for Scott.

Marla and Scott have one daughter, Amy, a fifth grader. Amy shares a hobby with her mother, they are both tap dancers, and perform frequently with their dancing group. The family also enjoys biking and outdoor activities, including white-water rafting. She and her husband both help out with local sports, in volunteer coaching and related duties.

Marla sees Providence as a company which "invests in its employees" – she already feels the support and concern of a very caring group. "I also find working so close to home a huge asset," she says.

Dawn Anderson is the new Medical Assistant, and will work with Jeanette in patient care. Dawn received her Medical Assistant certificate from Concord Career College in Portland in August of 2001. As part of her training, she was assigned to the Vernonia clinic for her externship, which was a real help in getting oriented into her job now. Also, she is now in training to become a Certified X-ray Technician. She worked for the Northwest Women's Clinic in northwest Portland before accepting the Vernonia job. "While I enjoyed my job there," she says, "It is wonderful not to commute such a distance every day."

Dawn grew up in Vernonia, is a single parent, mother of Stacia, age 13. She and her daughter share many hobbies: hiking, gardening, sports, and especially reading. Their house is very quiet in the evening, when they both love to read.

"I feel a strong need to give back to my community," Dawn says. "I feel that it is important to give every patient the very best care possible."

Next Mammovan Visit: The mammovan will be in Vernonia on October 23. Call the local clinic (503-429-9191) to schedule a mammogram.

Carry a tasty, nutritious and safe lunch

Some people "brown bag" their lunches because they don't have time to go out; others prefer homemade foods and some kids don't like to eat in the school cafeteria. Whatever the reason, with a little advance planning, lunch can be tasty, nutritious and safe.

- Always keep it clean. Make sure hands, food preparation surfaces and utensils are clean. Use hot, soapy water to effectively get rid of bacteria. Teach children to wash hands before eating. Also wash fruits and vegetables before packing.

- Keep hot foods such as soup, chili or stew hot by using an insulated bottle. Fill the bottle with boiling water and let it stand for a few minutes. Empty the bottle and fill it with piping

hot food. Keep closed until lunchtime.

- Cold foods should stay cold. Invest in a freezer gel pack and an insulated lunch box. Freezer gel packs keep foods cold until lunchtime, but are not recommended for all day storage. Perishable food should be discarded.

- Use the refrigerator at school or work, if available. If not, make sure the lunch is kept out of direct sunlight and away from radiators, baseboards and other heat sources found in offices and classrooms.

- Keep a supply of shelf stable foods for easy packing. Include fresh fruits and vegetables, crackers, bread and peanut butter, packaged pud-

ding and canned fruits or meats and fish. It is safe to take cheddar cheese and yogurt out of the refrigerator in the morning and leave them at room temperature until lunch time. Packaged foods that are sold unrefrigerated, such as applesauce and pudding, can also be included.

- Freeze single size juice packs overnight and place the frozen drink in the lunch. The juice will thaw by lunch time and keep the rest of the lunch cold.

- Sandwiches made the night before should be kept in the refrigerator until morning. Freezing sandwiches helps keep them cold, but lettuce, mayonnaise and tomatoes don't freeze well.

Prescription drugs topic of public forum

Oregon has undertaken a rigorous public process to identify the best drugs at the best possible price for the Oregon Health Plan. The state will ask physicians to refer to the lists of most effective and least costly drugs, and will have an exception process to ensure that patients and physicians retain control of treatment decisions.

A series of 20 forums about both the scientific process and changes for Oregon Health Plan enrollees will be held across the state, including Portland and Seaside, October 15 through November 20.

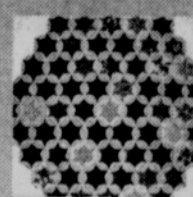
"The costs of prescription drugs are increasing faster than any other part of the Oregon Health Plan," says John Santa, M.D., administrator of

the state Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research. "Cost and effectiveness is important to both consumers and taxpayers. Our findings confirm

that most costly does not always equal most effective."

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