

Ryan White System offers HIV services

Are you HIV positive? Is a family member HIV positive? Do you need help getting medical or dental care? Housing? Transportation? Health insurance? These are only some of the services and referrals available in Columbia County through the Ryan White Care System.

The Ryan White System is a group of agencies that receives funds to provide services to people who are HIV positive. Many of these services are free or low-cost. If you live in Co-

lumbia County, you qualify for services if either you or a family member is HIV positive and meet the income limit.

Once you are in the program, a case manager will work with you to make a plan based on your needs. For some clients, the immediate need is finding a doctor who knows about HIV treatment options. Clients who already have a doctor may need gas vouchers or bus tickets to get to and from appointments. Others need help paying for HIV medica-

tions. The purpose of the program is to identify individual needs and find ways to meet those needs so that people who are HIV positive stay as healthy as possible.

The program is named after Ryan White, who was 13 years old when he was diagnosed with AIDS in 1984. His struggles to continue attending public school and get needed services made national headlines. Ryan and his family worked hard to replace the bigotry and fear surrounding HIV and AIDS with greater understanding of the disease. A few months after Ryan's death in 1990, the Ryan White CARE Act was passed by Congress. His legacy continues today through the Ryan White Care System.

To learn more about the Ryan White Care System, HIV and AIDS, or to be tested for HIV, call Columbia Public Health, 503-397-4651, or 1-800-244-4870.

Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner



Judith Hargis, P.A.-C., is launching an ongoing effort to inform the community about a variety of health issues. So watch this column over the coming months for some information of general interest for better health.

This month's topic is ALLERGIES. Anyone suffering from this annoying condition knows how uncomfortable it can be. And, it is often hard to determine whether you are coming down with a cold or flu, or if maybe it's just those seasonal allergies kicking in. The symptoms can be deceptively similar: you may feel fatigue, body aches, even cough and sore throat; these symptoms can be allergy-related.

Here are some "red flags" to look for when asking "Is it flu or allergies?":

- High fever, not relieved by Tylenol or other medication
- Persistent cough
- Extensive sinus pressure or pain
- Symptoms not improving after three or four days.

If these symptoms are present, you should be seen for evaluation and possible treatment. If it is determined that it is allergies that are bugging you, there are a number of remedies out there to try. If symptoms continue despite medication, you might be referred to an allergy specialist for skin tests to find out exactly what it is that is causing your reactions.

Unfortunately, antibiotics are NOT a treatment for allergies, and antibiotics WILL NOT CURE your virus cold or flu. Taking antibiotics when they are not indicated or not needed may even harm you. Overuse of antibiotics can create "stronger" germs, which become resistant to the antibiotic; the medical community has found in recent years that some germs are already becoming resistant to common antibiotics such as penicillin.

There are many different kinds of allergies that plague patients – some "seasonal" like the hay fever type that usually hits in the spring with multiple symptoms of sneezing, runny nose, watery, itchy eyes. Others are present year round, such as allergies to house dust mites.

These few words barely scratch the surface of the world of allergies; the subject is very complex and confusing. Providence-Vernonia urges allergy sufferers to call for an appointment to get help in managing this aggravating condition.

Next Mammovan Visit is August 18. Call 503-429-9191 for an appointment.

Women's Center will close doors temporarily to clean and do repairs

Columbia County Women's Resource Center will be closed for three weeks to clean and paint starting at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 23, and will reopen at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, August 16. Phone calls (503-397-6161 and 866-397-6161) will be forwarded to the Portland Women's Crisis Line.

In order to get everything done, the Center needs help from the community. Volunteers with time and expertise are needed for tasks that include cleaning windows, repairing screens, tile work, gar-

dening or any number of "household chores." To volunteer – for a few hours or a whole day – call Elizabeth at 503-397-7110.

Because of budget constraints, the Center is also seeking help with cleaning supplies, paint and other miscellaneous materials needed for repairs. Also needed are twin and full size sheets, pillows, blankets and towels. Constant use and repeated washings wear out these items quickly.

For more information, call 503-397-7110.

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