

Veterans can get help with issues of post traumatic stress disorder

Veterans account for a troubling 20 percent of our nation's suicides. This means that every day in the United States, an average of 18 veterans take their own lives – or about one every 80 minutes. Twenty-seven percent of Oregon's suicides are veterans. From 2005 to 2010, active service members took their own lives at a rate of approximately one every 36 hours.

Post Traumatic Stress may occur in those who experience or witness intense violence, serious accidents, or life-threatening events. It can make people feel angry, hopeless, fearful, horrified, and overwhelmed. Post Traumatic Stress is treatable.

Many veterans and active military balk at seeking help through traditional channels due to fear of negative career impact, the stigma of perceived weakness among their peers and frustration with red tape. Left untreated, the challenges can intensify as they feel more isolated.

"Often it's family and friends who see the conflict, but don't know how to help. We encourage them to call us day or night" said Josh Groesz, Iraq

War veteran and Director of the Military Helpline. "This is a tangible way to truly thank people for their military service"

The line is answered by a highly trained and dedicated team of volunteer crisis workers, many of whom have military backgrounds. All possess a strong understanding of the serious issues that can impact service members and their families, including the loss of a job, family strife, alcohol and drug abuse, home foreclosure, post-traumatic stress, suicidal thoughts and other medical and health care concerns.

Service members, military veterans and their family members struggling with thoughts of suicide, feelings they don't understand, pain they can't define and questions that need answers, receive immediate free, anonymous assistance from Oregon Partnership's Military Helpline – (888) 457-4838, or they can chat securely online at www.MilitaryHelpline.org.

Founded in 1993, Oregon Partnership is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to end substance abuse and suicide. To learn more, visit www.orpartnership.org.

Public urged to use antibiotics wisely

As we enter cold and flu season, it's important to be aware of the correct use of antibiotics, caution public health experts.

"If you have a cold or the flu, antibiotics won't work for you," said Ann Thomas, M.D., of the Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division.

This is the simple message being passed from nursing, pharmacy and physician assistant students and to children in 21 Oregon school districts.

The campaign is part of an innovative collaboration among six Oregon health professional schools and the Oregon Alliance Working for Antibiotic Resistance Education (AWARE). Thomas is medical director for AWARE, a statewide coalition promoting the appropriate use of antibiotics.

So what's the problem with taking antibiotics when they're not needed? According to Thomas, a few facts sum up the reasons to worry about overuse of antibiotics:

- It's estimated that more than half of antibiotics prescribed for respiratory illnesses like coughs and colds are unnecessary.

- Taking antibiotics when you don't need them, or not as prescribed, increases your risk of getting an infection later that resists effective antibiotic treatment.

- Side effects to antibiotics are another drawback; allergic reactions to antibiotics, such as rash and anaphylaxis, send thousands of patients to the emergency room yearly.

By teaching students who are just starting their health care careers about appropriate antibiotic use – students who then pass this knowledge on to school children using games and activities designed for children in kindergarten through sixth grades – AWARE is training both health care providers and consumers about the hazards of inappropriate use.

For consumers who are concerned about preventing the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and want to avoid health risks from the improper use of antibiotics, Oregon AWARE has three key messages:

- Don't pressure your clinician to prescribe antibiotics for

viral infections such as colds or flu.

- If antibiotics are prescribed, take every dose – even if your symptoms improve. Not finishing the treatment contributes to the development of resistant bacteria.

- Never share antibiotics. Taking a prescription that isn't yours or using leftover antibiotics to try and treat an illness can cause adverse reactions.

The AWARE partnership includes physicians, health care providers, public health agencies, and representatives from higher education and community organizations. Founded in 2001 out of concern for the growing problem of antibiotic resistance, Oregon AWARE is one of 10 state and local programs coordinated through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work" campaign.

To find out what you can do to help promote the safe use of antibiotics and to learn more about Oregon AWARE, go to healthoregon.org/antibiotics or call 971-673-1100.

AIUSA likes the Governor's stand on death penalty

In response to Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber's announcement to halt executions in the state during his administration, Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) Death Penalty Abolition

Campaigner Brian Evans issued the following comment:

"Amnesty International welcomes Gov. Kitzhaber's rejection of the death penalty. He has courageously joined the

growing chorus of responsible elected officials who have realized that the death penalty cannot be fixed, and that there are better ways to protect public safety and honor victims' families."

AIUSA activists worked to repeal the death penalty in New Jersey, New Mexico and Illinois, in addition to Oregon. For more information, visit www.amnestyusa.org/abolish.



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