

The Daily Dose

Faces from the frontlines of Oregon's Health Care Crisis



Volume 2 Issue 3

June 21, 2007



“Saw a woman last night who was covered by OHP during her pregnancy and is now 3 months post-partum and having continuous severe bladder leakage and no options for care.”

Dr. Jill Ginsberg, Portland

Dr. Jill Ginsberg, MD MPH works as a physician for Kaiser Permanente and volunteers as the Medical Director for the North by Northeast Clinic in Portland. The all-volunteer clinic began last August when Ginsberg and Pastor Mary Overstreet teamed to fill a void in their neighborhood. While delivering donations for Hurricane Katrina victims, Dr. Ginsberg met Pastor Overstreet. Pastor Overstreet asked for Ginsberg's help and the rest is history. "I couldn't think of a reason to say no," explains Dr. Ginsberg.

Now, one night a week volunteer doctors, nurses and social workers open their doors to offer free health care. They see an average of 15 patients per night. "The biggest unmet need is dental care. Almost 100% of our patients say they need care and can't afford it. There are very little low cost or free dental options," explains Dr. Ginsberg.

Dr. Ginsberg spends about 40 hours a week working on the clinic. She's hoping it will require less time in the future, but right now is dedicated to getting care to those in need. "There are so many people who have a lot of health care needs that just don't get what they need," says Dr. Ginsberg. "We have lots of stories from North by Northeast. A 39 year old man who lost his insurance right after having a massive heart attack. A 35 year old woman who was in the ICU after emergency surgery when her OHP lapsed. We've seen a lot of people with insulin-dependent diabetes and heart disease and no way to get their meds. Lots of people with easily treatable hypertension who are at risk of major complications/expense/loss of work (or can't get a job due to uncontrolled high blood pressure). On and on and on," says Ginsberg. Funding for health and human services is a critical need. Fix HB 5031. Don't continue to leave Dr. Ginsberg's patients behind! To learn more about the clinic and schedule a visit or volunteer go to www.nxneclinic.org.

Dr. Ginsberg's Message to the Legislature:

“It's a heartbreaking experience. I love being able to help people, but it saddens me how people are left on their own. It just kills me. I wish legislators would come to our clinic and hear people's stories directly.”

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