

Southwest Washington Medical Center uncompensated services at record highs

Counting charity care, bad debt, Medicaid shortfalls and community services, Southwest Washington Medical Center's combined contribution in community services exceeded \$56.7 million for fiscal year 2005, according to SWMC president and CEO, **Joseph Kortum**.

Kortum says that the medical center is concerned about the continued rise in uncompensated care and shortfalls in Medicaid reimbursements. He says, "A minimum margin is required to fund the cost of providing high-quality patient care, a highly skilled workforce, quality medical staff, state-of-the-art technology, and other programs a healthy community needs."

Kortum quickly adds, "Concerns over a hospital bill should never deter anyone from seeking the medical care they need."

The medical center provided \$15.4 million in charity care, up 17 percent from the previous year. This was in the form of uncompensated care for patients who were uninsured or underinsured and could not afford their care.

Bad debt in the form of services for which SWMC never received payment amounted to \$25.3 million for the past fiscal year. The medical center also absorbed \$11.6 million in Medicaid shortfalls and un-reimbursed costs of caring for Medicaid patients in the hospital. Moreover, the medical center provided \$4.4 million in community services and un-reimbursed costs of programs and activities.

In addition to the \$56.7 shortfall, the medical center provided community health organizations with nearly \$6 million for programs for the poor and underserved populations. These include Healthy Steps Women's and Children's Clinic, Family Medicine Family Practice Residency and Clinic, Behavioral Health Services and the Free Clinic of Southwest Washington.

The not-for profit medical center paid nearly \$25 million in taxes last year, including sales taxes, business and occupational taxes and payroll taxes.

Philip Harju, Craig Rowland to debate Cowlitz Casino Resort

Philip Harju, Cowlitz Indian Tribe councilman, and **Craig Rowland**, representing Citizens Against Reservation Shopping, will provide pros and cons about the proposed half-billion-dollar, 152-acre Cowlitz Casino Resort between Ridgefield and La Center on Interstate 5, at a luncheon at 11:45 a.m. Wednesday, March 1, in the Heathman Lodge.

The public discussion is jointly sponsored by the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce and Identity Clark County. Reservations for the \$30 luncheon may be obtained by calling **694-2558**, or by going to www.vancouverusa.com.

Clark College Running Start test deadline is Wednesday

The last day to sign up for the Clark College Running Start test for fall quarter is Wednesday, March 1. Current high school sophomores and juniors who have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 should see their public high school counselor to sign up for the test no later than March 1. Home-schooled and private-schooled students should go to the nearest public high school counseling office to sign-up for the testing, which will be held during the month of March at Clark College. Sample test questions and additional information can be found by going to www.clark.edu/runningstart. For further information, call **992-2842**.

People

Clark County community relations manager/ombudsman **Marion Anderson** has been presented an Outstanding Clark County employee award from the Neighborhood Associations Council of Clark County.

Calendar

The Vancouver City Council meets in workshop session at 4 p.m. today. During its regular meeting at 7 p.m. the council is expected to give initial approval for a business tax surcharge. ☞ Port of Vancouver commissioners meet in regular session at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28. ☞ Clark County commissioners meet in regular session at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Monday headlines from at home and around the world

[Microsoft mystery device found on line is like iPod and then some--Seattle P-I, **Todd Bishop**](#)
[New interchange cameras helping motorists find best way to avoid bottlenecks--Columbian, **Thomas Ryll**](#)
[Branch: Educating children is everyone's responsibility--Columbian, **Jose Paul Corona**](#)
[Battle Ground School District voters to get another chance--Columbian, **Jose Paul Corona**](#)
[Democrats to hold precinct caucuses Saturday--Columbian](#)
[Vancouver's Dotster expanding--Columbian, **Courtney Sherwood**](#)
[Joner and Sherwood join Columbian news department as business writers--Columbian](#)
[Salmon ban could beach Oregon fishing boats--KATU](#)
[Sunnis may rejoin government--USA TODAY, AP](#)

Monday on the air

Vancouver City Council Workshop (live)—4 pm. CVTV
San Francisco at Gonzaga (live)—6 p.m. FSN
Vancouver City Council (live)—7 p.m. CVTV
Portland Blazers at Sacramento (live)—7 p.m. KGW-TV, KXL, KMUZ
San Diego at University of Portland (live)—7 p.m. KKAD

Town Tabloids and the weather

David Ballou carrying the mail. ☞ **Nancy Simmons** getting a make-up call. ☞ **Karen Sahlstrom** counting the house. ☞ **E. J. Easter** checking book sales. ☞ **Steve Hansen** welcoming after-hours guests. ☞ **Monday**, intermittent rain, 43. **Tuesday**, light rain, 50. **Wednesday**, rainy, 47.