

Portland's post-hospital care for homeless falls short of meeting needs

Posted by [areifent](#) March 23, 2009 21:25PM



Doug Beghtel/The Oregonian

It wasn't until Richard Perez, who has diabetes, lost his leg after being struck by a car that he was finally able to get temporary housing and regular access to medicine that has stabilized his blood sugar levels.

The first time diabetes landed Richard Perez in Providence Portland Medical Center, the homeless man was discharged with little more than a bottle of pills and a bus pass.

"You're putting me out just to the streets, and I'm having all these meds, carrying them around with me," Perez remembers thinking during his discharge last spring.

Homeless since his 2004 release from prison for crimes including robbery, statutory rape and compelling prostitution, the Portland native wandered the city looking for places to rest and to hide his pills so others wouldn't steal them: "I was up for days, because I slept for days in Providence."

In December, Perez landed back in the Providence medical center after a car hit his right leg. His diabetes, rampant from the poor diet and rough life on the streets, made that wound a crisis. Doctors gave him a choice: Lose the leg or lose your life.

This time, when Perez left the hospital, a van drove him to a new home in downtown Portland's Henry Building. The nonprofit Central City Concern runs a Recuperation Care Program there for homeless adults who need regular nursing after a hospital stay. Providence paid roughly \$4,000 for Perez to get 30 days in a small, tidy room, nutritious food and regular care for his amputation site, while staff helped him look for benefits and stable housing.

Perez shows both sides of a system that tries but often fails to protect homeless people leaving local hospitals. Portland is one of a few dozen U.S. cities with "respite care" programs to help the homeless recover medically, and Central City's program is something of a national model.

But Portland's programs don't come close to meeting the full need. Homeless people recovering from poisoning, broken bones and other conditions that don't need intense post-hospital care are often left to fend for themselves in Portland's fragmented, underfunded network of homeless services. Some get discharged back to temporary shelters where they can get a few nights in a bunk. Others just return to the

streets, until they get sick enough to land back in the hospital.

"It's not a system," said Alvin Taylor, a mission manager at Union Gospel Mission, which provides meals to the homeless in Old Town. "What happens is they keep coming back, over and over."

ER visits

Portland's homeless population is especially sickly. A survey of 646 people sleeping outside in Portland last October found nearly half had asthma, hepatitis, heart disease or other conditions that make them "medically vulnerable." More than 40 percent of the people surveyed said they visited an emergency room at least three times in the previous three months.

The revolving door between the streets and the emergency room affects anyone who uses a hospital or has health insurance. The 646 people surveyed used almost \$1.5 million in ER services in 2008. Since two-thirds of the surveyed were uninsured, that totals \$1 million in unpaid bills -- losses that get passed on to paying patients through higher hospital charges and insurance rates.

City officials estimate that 4,000 people sleep in shelters or outdoors each night, and the actual toll of unpaid ER costs for the homeless could be roughly \$6 million. Local hospitals say that, on an average day, more than a dozen homeless people are spending the night as inpatients, adding millions more to the annual cost.

No one tracks how many of these patients get discharged to a street in Old Town, where Portland's homeless service agencies cluster. But workers at those agencies say they commonly see people seeking help, still wearing their hospital wristbands.

"Sometimes we'll get people in our lobby, and I'm like, 'How did you get down here? How are you back on the street?'" said Andrew Anderson, outreach chaplain with Portland Rescue Mission's men's shelter.

At nearby Union Gospel Mission, staff have "dealt with three or four people recently who have hospital tags on their arm, who were just released and don't know what to do next," communications director Stacy Kean said. One man in particular sticks in mission manager Taylor's mind.

"He had a walker, he had his identification badge on his arm, he had his meds on his walker and he had no socks on," Taylor said. "He should never have been let out of the hospital, in my opinion."

Post-hospital planning

Local hospitals are in a bind when they have to discharge homeless people. It's unethical to send patients into a dangerous situation. But hospitals can't keep healthy homeless patients. That would just fill up beds sick patients need and court bankruptcy.

"The hospital's not designed to be a shelter or a hostel or a domiciliary. They're designed to be a profit-making enterprise," said Jason Renaud of the Mental Health Association of Portland.

Federal law and accreditation rules require hospitals to make discharge plans for each patient. But nothing bars discharging someone to a homeless shelter or a part of town with homeless services.

Discharge planners at Providence, Oregon Health & Science University and Legacy Health System handle homeless patients in similar ways: Case managers look at a patient's diagnoses and resources to help them apply for housing and other benefits, such as Social Security. Sometimes case managers help patients contact friends or family who may provide a bed, even for a while. If that fails, the hospitals consider a program such as Central City Concern's.

As a last resort, case managers call temporary shelters, hoping to snag at least a few days of food and rest. The shelters usually try to make space for just-released patients, though they are often full, especially in winter.

So some homeless patients get sent from local hospitals with just a list of shelters and a travel voucher. Although OHSU won't discharge homeless patients to an unsafe place, care manager Paul Vergeer said, some just get cab or bus rides to Old Town.

And some are OK with that.

"A fair number really don't want to go to the shelter. They'd rather sleep under a bridge somewhere," said Robin Weisshaar, manager of social services at Legacy Good Samaritan.

Seeking solutions

The realization that hospitals and homeless agencies were trading clients back and forth spurred the search for a humane solution. Providence made an early effort, paying Central City Concern to offer shelter and care to discharged homeless patients. But that program had "way too many barriers" to succeed with homeless patients, said Ted Amann, Central City director of health care, including bans on guests and alcohol and a 9 p.m. curfew.

The nonprofit's Recuperation Care Program began in 2005 when OHSU decided to try a similar approach with fewer restrictions. It began with just a few beds, program manager Nic Granum said. Impressed by the results, OHSU expanded the project, and Providence, Legacy and other Multnomah County health providers signed on.

Today, the program has 25 small rooms in the Henry Building. Hospitals pick whom to send through the program and pay roughly \$4,000 per patient, depending on their insurance. The hospitals also agree to give a month of medicine and specialty care for free. Program staff help residents care for their injuries and look for jobs, benefits and more stable housing. Most residents go on to live with friends and family or move into transitional or permanent housing, Granum said.

Though they hate talking numbers, the Recuperation Care Program seems to save hospitals millions. Over three years, OHSU leaders say they paid Central City \$500,000 to take patients, which averted \$3.5 million in costs OHSU would have paid for housing or retreating the patients. And "if a hospital's willing to publicly say \$3.5 million, I'm thinking the real number is between \$10 and \$15" million, Amann said.

Support from hospitals is key to the program's success. The federal government has no steady funding for medical respite care for the homeless, said Sabrina Edgington, a policy analyst with the National Health Care for the Homeless Council. Budget woes have closed many programs that weren't funded by hospitals or cities, she said.

That fate killed an infirmary trying to fill the biggest gap in Portland's respite care system, help for homeless people who are sick but don't need daily nursing.

In late 2005, OHSU and the Salvation Army opened a 15-bed infirmary on the second floor of the Salvation Army's Harbor Lights shelter downtown. "A fair number of people came in throughout the week, or were dropped off by taxicabs," said manager Marna Flaherty-Robb, then-associate dean of OHSU's School of Nursing.

But demand soon outstripped the infirmary's resources. It was hard to find enough volunteers to staff the program. Donations used to fund the infirmary started to run out and the Salvation Army had many demands for that space, Flaherty-Robb said. The program petered out in early 2007.

Hole in safety net

Housing moderately sick homeless people remains a big hole in Portland's safety net. Portland's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness lists not transferring people from hospitals to the streets as a top priority. But the plan's funding is focused on the toughest cases: addicts, felons and other chronically homeless, single adults who use the most resources. The consequence is that couples, the sober and the simply sick have the hardest time finding help.

"There's this gap between a full-blown recovery program and the street," Portland Rescue Mission's Anderson said. And with the economy faltering, he said, that gap is filling with people "who don't necessarily have serious addiction problems, but they just ran out of money."

"If something doesn't change on how this community spends its resources," he said, "we're going to end up pushing away the most needy."

The economy also may test the Recuperation Care Program. It's never operated in a recession, and though hospitals save in the long run, they must spend up front to send patients through. Meanwhile, demand probably will rise as more people are pushed out of homes.

But for Perez, life is looking up. With decent food and regular access to medicine, his blood sugar stabilized in his month at the Henry. Earlier this year, he moved into the Clark Annex, a supportive housing unit run by Transition Projects Inc. And last week, he was approved to move into a new apartment complex on Northeast Martin Luther King Boulevard.

"That's my ultimate goal: I've got an income coming in and am able to pay my rent, pay some bills," Perez said. "Hopefully that works out, because that'll be a blessing. That'll be a success story. Right now, I don't know what success is."

-- Andy Dworkin; andydworkin@news.oregonian.com

Resource guide

- [Learn more about the Recuperation Care Program](#)
- [Information on homeless respite care programs nationwide](#)
- [Portland services for homeless adults](#); or call 2-1-1
- [Services for homeless families](#); or call 2-1-1
- [Survey of health issues and hospital use among Portland's homeless population](#)
- [Portland's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness](#)

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Comments

P5133XL says...

Very good article! I especially appreciate that you included the resource guide giving links so that people can get more information, money, or volunteer.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 3:17AM

jeffie79 says...

This article is barely touching the tip of the iceberg - but kudos for writing about an ongoing issue! You might also research how these types of people not only keep the ERs from acutally being able to handle "real emergencies in a timely manner" but also strain the Police, Fire and EMS/Paramedic systems in the

Portland area. Why does it take an extra 5 minutes for these services to respond when Grandma cant breathe, your house is on fire, or someone is breaking into your house? It is the BS calls that people make to 911 and most of these BS calls are directly related to drug and alcohol abuse and mental health issues.

It is hard for me to understand how we keep catering to people who are irresponsible and never take responsibility for their own health or livelihood. These people who are seen at the ER once a month (or once a week) for issues that are directly linked to drug and alcohol abuse or mental health issues often never follow through on the referrals that social services give them. They go from ER to ER because they dont like the services rendered when the ER staff tell them to sober up or go and see their therapist and take their medications regularly. Its sooo true that your higher insurance premiums are paying for them to "sleep it off".

I think that these places of respite care for those who have significant medcial problems are a great idea, but its tragic that many cannot even handle being clean and sober with a 9pm cerfew. Dont waste your time on people who refuse to follow the rules, there are many more who acutally need help and are willing to put forth some effort in their personal recovery.

So what do we tell families that are working 2 or 3 jobs to make ends meet, but can't afford health insurance or food on the table? Sorry, we gave your health insurance and food stamps to the ex-con who is an alcoholic and continues to smoke and is non-compliant with his medications? The picture for this article just baffles me... why do we give an expensive wheelchair and fancy coat and cigarettes to someone who is just milking the system?

I believe that everyone who is recieving "handouts" of some kind... food stamps, Medicaid ect, should be help responsible for what they are given. They should do community service, take a parenting class or a class on finances, finish their GED or take a class that will give them job skills, pick up trash, do something to help contribute to our community. I know a guy who is Mentally a little "slow" and has Seizures so bad he has to wear a helmet, and that guy works at the Goodwill monday through friday - he puts all the rest to shame with his work ethic. Its just tragic that we are allowing people to continue in thier selfish lazy behaviors and even rewarding them for it. If you dont work (or volunteer or something) you dont eat!

Posted on 03/24/09 at 3:41AM

bktzoo says...

Of course sick people are discharged to the streets; it shouldn't be the hospital's responsibility to house people. Mr Perez CHOSE a life of robbery and "compelling prostitution." Shouldn't we EXPECT his life to be difficult? When people are willing to take responsibility for their lives, then society should offer people assistance. When people choose criminal behavior, substance abuse and poor treatment compliance, they should expect poor outcomes.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 7:54AM

OSUBLAZIN says...

What should I do if a bum threatens to slit my throat when walking to work in the morning? This happened to me today and it was a little scary, maybe not for myself but to think someone like that is walking our streets downtown is disturbing. I have seen this particular homeless man around town a lot and this is the first time I have heard him speak violently. Portland needs to do something about our homeless population!

Posted on 03/24/09 at 8:29AM

bikecrusher says...

waaaah, waaaaah, waaaaaah

Posted on 03/24/09 at 8:35AM

chays says...

Unbelievable. The dude is sitting there outside his free housing missing a leg, complaining about diabetes, and SMOKING!

Therein lies the problem. It's costing ME my hard earned money to preserve the life of someone who doesn't even care enough about his OWN life to take recuperation seriously.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 10:20AM

zippy700 says...

agree with chays

I am so sick of these stories. I am supposed to feel sorry for this CRIMINAL who CHOSE to rob and who knows what else? Not only that, I get to pay for him too?

No way.

Now he sits in his designer ecko jacket and headphones smoking cigarettes..what a joke.

No sympathy here.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 10:26AM

chays says...

I won't even take my kids downtown any more (much less Old Town) because I'm too scared they will get the wrong idea that you can do nothing, for yourself or others, and still make it in the world.

Plus I'm too scared some druggie will mug us, etc.

Stop rewarding failure and crime. Start rewarding responsibility and hard work.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 11:00AM

xIntzee56 says...

There are so many people who are but one or two paychecks from being homeless. It is, in my opinion, incumbent upon those of us in society who are more fortunate to give back to those less fortunate. It is not for us to judge the circumstances that brought these folks to where they are in life.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 12:11PM

andydtc says...

This article offers a decent overview of an issue that affects all of us. However, the comments posted by readers are disgusting.

Does demonizing people who are suffering from mental illness and addictions make us feel better about ourselves? Or does it provide a response to our fear of situations that we do not understand or comprehend?

There are thousands of Richard Perez's in our community and country, and they are the victims of our culture and society.

I would invite anyone who fears people experiencing poverty or homelessness to volunteer at an organization that serves these marginalized members of our community.

Maybe through developing relationships with people who do not have the same support network and good health that you have been gifted with you will begin to realize that we all have much more in common than we assume, and that we will all be better off when we stop demonizing one another.

If you are open to seeing the world and your community in a new way, shoot me a line: volunteer@downtownchapel.org.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 12:21PM

jimhinpdx says...

I'm sorry that Chays feels he/she has to raise their children in a bubble.

I suppose that it's normal for a parent to want to protect their child. But to shield them from the world the rest of us live in does them no favor. Doing so leaves them ignorant, frightened and reactionary to anything that challenges the comfort zone to which they've become attached.

My recommendation to parents who want to raise responsible, compassionate offspring is to do the opposite of Chay. Learn together with your children about things you don't understand, or which frighten you, and strive to understand the basis for your fears. Reach out to people who are different than you, that have had life experiences different than yours. Once you reach out from YOUR comfort zone, you'll increase the comfort zones of those different from you, but who share the same dreams and desires as you.

Peace out, Portland.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 12:44PM

chays says...

Here's where your argument falls flat for me: criminals/drug addicts=victims. I've been an actual victim and it feels a lot different to me than being a victim of self-apathy.

If these unfortunates you glorify (the opposite of dehumanize) are there through no fault of their own, then I - on the other end of the spectrum - am here through no fault of my own. No fault = no obligation and no guilt. It's all chance and we should just live and let live. If it's not chance, then why not support those to actually contribute to society, not drag it down.

In fact, I'd argue that it's YOU who dehumanize. When you say it's up to the rest of us to make their lives better, you knock them out of the realm of humanity. Humans always have choices. Animals don't. If these

poor unfortunates can't choose to make it on their own, or even try to better their circumstances in any way, then I'd much rather spend my money and time on actual humans - you know, the ones who can accept responsibility.

I haven't been "gifted" with good health, a support network, or a bottomless pocketbook. I work for those things EVERY DAY.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 12:49PM

chays says...

jim

I actually don't want my children to reach out to homeless drug abusing sex offenders. Call me crazy, but I would much rather they avoided them all together.

It's not about shielding, or lack of compassion, it's about not allowing them to be raped and murdered.

Maybe you don't read the news?

I think one of us lives in a bubble, but it aint me, and it won't be my kids.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 12:54PM

cb911 says...

seriously.....this is such crap.... that guy is sucking the system dry. We need to give him a bus ticket to L.A. get him out of portland. Pay attention to how many homeless/drunk/intoxicated people you see getting into ambulances and sitting in the ER's. that's your answer to why your taxes are so high and you can't afford health care. I know homeless people have medical problems,but honestly they use ambulances and ER's way more than needed...you don't go to the ER becuase you're addicted to pain meds and sold your last bottle for heroin..too bad. (no joke, happens every day) Over 95% of the people are BS pt's using ambulances and ER's when they shouldn't be. and you wonder why we couldn't get to your kid in time when he had meningitis and waited in the ER lobby while some BUM get's a nicotine patch, sandwich, warm blanket and watches cable T.V. while he sobers up. WONDERFUL. I WISH ER's COULD TURN THEM AWAY WHEN IT'S NOT A REAL EMERGENCY.- that's why it's called 911 and Emergency Room! get it????

Posted on 03/24/09 at 2:21PM

cb911 says...

and even if they do have medicare or medicaid.....they don't usually pay for ambulance trips into the hospitals if MEDICARE/MEDICAID doesn't deem the trip "Medically Necessary" so there you go, these companies aren't even getting paid... wonderful. every company can stay afloat with no profits.... don't wonder why your ambulance/hospital bill was so high, now you know why.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 2:23PM

bktzoo says...

Andydtc, How is Mr Perez a "victim" of society? He VICTIMIZED society with his criminal behavior. Why is it

"disgusting" to suggest that people take responsibility for their own lives? Perhaps your charity only enables people to continue making poor choices? A safety net shouldn't be a hammock.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 3:20PM

jenzo503 says...

Seriously, I don't feel sorry for this dude. WTF He ain't no dam victim. You guys made a poor choice in who to spotlight on here. He was a pimp before, I'm sure all he has to do is wink at another obese color challenged woman and she'll buy him another jacket like he has on now. I guarantee, that's how it goes in portland.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 3:52PM

jexpat says...

Reading some of the comments here, it's easy to see why America has the worlds largest and most expensive prison system (both terms of raw numbers incarcerated and per capita).

It's also fairly clear why the American healthcare system remains so dysfunctional- spending a far greater proportion of GDP only to score much poorer on major health outcome indices than most every other western nation (and some third world nations). That, while bankrupting millions of its citizens who HAVE insurance if they or a family member fall ill or is injured.

Now, I daresay some of the commentators here DESERVE exactly what they're getting- and will get and then some, but to make policy that way, is like cutting off your noses to spite your faces.

None too bight, to say the least.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 4:46PM

chays says...

thanks jexpat, for the vote of confidence.

Some people might get all wound about admitting that a culture that rewards failure would have a huge prison population. I agree, if we stopped rewarding criminal behavior and encouraged personal responsibility, these numbers would drop.

Same goes for the folks taking a medical "free ride" on the paychecks of hard working men and women.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 8:12PM

renpilgrim says...

I have a couple of comments on this article. I work in a local ER. I've worked at two different ERs in Portland over the past 8 years and so most of what I have to say is from experience.

1) If you are going to profile how hard it is for homeless individuals to find a suitable place to recover from hospitalization, pick someone who is not an ex-con, diabetic, smoker. I have very little sympathy for people who accept no responsibility for their situation.

2) You made it sound like hospital ERs discharge patients the way you find them on the street. This is not true. We work very hard to make sure patients are clothed and supplied with sufficient medication to get them to a follow-up visit with their PCP or we assign them a PCP to follow up with. I'm sorry, but we cannot hold everyone's hand. Folks need to accept personal responsibility for their health and many homeless individuals are mentally ill or incapable of doing what many of us take for granted. You cannot expect ER staff to be social workers.

3) The majority of ER patients, homeless or not, do NOT need to be in the ER. Unfortunately, EMTALA requires we see everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. Of course, technically, you only have to provide a medical screening, so if it is deemed that you are not having a medical emergency, we can send you somewhere else. Expect this to happen more often in the future.

4) People utilize EMS, EDs and 911 inappropriately all the time. These people need to be held accountable for misuse of emergency resources.

5) It all boils down to personal responsibility. Our society is full of people who are not held accountable for their behaviors. If you smoke, you are diabetic, and you lose your leg, why should my tax dollars pay for your poor decisions?

6) Many people think we don't have socialized medicine in the US. We do. It's what I call "back-door socialized medicine". Those of us that are insured are paying higher premiums to offset the costs of covering the uninsured in this country.

Cover The Uninsured Week is coming up....you should check it out.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 8:20PM

UPS68 says...

Thanks Ren - some great information.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 8:32PM

P5133XL says...

From my read of the comments, there is general agreement: Hurt and sick homeless/Mentally ill people should suffer because they are irresponsible and deserves to suffer. What matters most is not that they suffer but rather they do so out of sight and that responsible taxpayers/people do not have to pay.

I hope all that feel such never need the help of strangers. They must not believe in the concept of doing unto others as you would wish done to you or what goes around, comes around, or even of KARMA. Obviously to these, it matters more how the suffering occurred than the suffering itself when considering the relief of that suffering.

Somewhere the society has morphed from a caring society to into one that is selfish and has little empathy or consideration for others.

Posted on 03/24/09 at 10:10PM

4everOregon says...

SMUG ALERT...SMUG ALERT:

Oh, you smug little smarms; talkin bout how you are paying for somebody else and blah, blah, blah - when you were a little tyke, my taxes and my blood, sweat, and tears - paid for YOU!

And when you are older and don't have the resources to pay your own medical costs, or other, someone younger will be paying for YOURS!

It's a trickle down society: When we're healthiest and working the most, then most of our taxes and insurances we pay - go towards helping someone else, but mark my words, it will then come back to be needed by us, at a time when we are less financially able, but indeed, more vulnerable!

YOU ALL act like you will never get sick/old and therefore, are above it all. Well, unless you're an alcoholic or doing drugs, you'll be around to a ripe old age too, and I sure hope folks aren't as smartarsed towards you, as you are now towards others! Ah, then again, perhaps they should be worse?!

Posted on 03/24/09 at 11:45PM

aphasia says...

'Andy Dworkin' did an incredible job with a very touchy-feely subject - MONEY.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 12:34AM

jexpat says...

chays wrote:

thanks jexpat, for the vote of confidence.

Some people might get all wound about admitting that a culture that rewards failure would have a huge prison population. I agree, if we stopped rewarding criminal behavior and encouraged personal responsibility, these numbers would drop.

Same goes for the folks taking a medical "free ride" on the paychecks of hard working men and women.

This is also the sort of deal that I'm talking about. As much as anything, it exemplifies an inability to examine one's attitudes and beliefs- even though they *result* in poor outcomes for all concerned.

Take a look at similar nations like Canada and Australia. No banks have failed- indeed, they're the healthiest banks in the world.

Their people also enjoy much better health- on every health outcome index. None of their citizens lose thier homes and retirement to medical bills- their business' profitability isn't burdened with health care costs and they pay FAR less all of this than Americans do.

Nor do they have draconian criminal laws- nor anywhere near US violent crime rates- and hence- massive and expensive prison system (larger than China's Russia's or India's).

Seems to me- based on the evidence, that they're doing something right that American might want to emulate.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 1:13AM

chays says...

smug: contentedly confident of one's ability, superiority, or correctness...

"...mark my words, it will then come back to be needed by us, at a time when we are less financially able, but indeed, more vulnerable!"

Uhm, does that smug alert go both ways?

Got no problem helping others, but with finite resources and spiking need, I'd rather help those who at least try to help themselves.

If this guy is mentally unstable, then he should be institutionalized (and I'm happy to see tax dollars diverted for that reason). If not, he should actually be expected work a little harder because of his poor decisions. That's the way we all learn to not make bad decisions...not by getting a tax payer funded "EASY" button.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 8:09AM

Mailroom says...

mailers will be homeless at new wages.

MAILERS WILL STRIKE AT THE OREGONIAN

IT'S EASY JUST CANCEL THE PAPER

THE PAPER HAS GOTTEN SMALLER AND MORE EXPENSIVE WHILE THE WAGES ARE GOING DOWN IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE IN THIS ECONOMY FOR A BAD BUSINESS PRACTICE BESIDES WE NEED TO SAVE OUR ENVIRONMENT AND WE CAN GET THE SAME THING ONLINE FOR FREE WAY TO GO OREGONIAN BESIDES THE OLD WHITE PERSON WHO KEEPS THE PAPER IS ABOUT TO DIE OFF FROM OLD AGE ANYWAYS IT DOESN'T MATTER TO SINCE oregonlive.com COMES FROM Chicago

Posted on 03/25/09 at 9:06AM

PDXNewbie says...

I sit here at my desk at the job I hate but still drag myself to every day because I have no choice. In this economy, we do what we must to feed our children, pay for housing, keep the car running, etc. I wore my warmest coat this morning, even though the seam at the pocket is completely falling apart. It's embarrassing, but I'm no seamstress and frankly spending the money to fix it seems like more of a luxury than I can afford right now. My car is barely running, the tires need to be replaced ASAP, it's funny looking, old and beat up, but it runs. We ate ramen noodles last night for dinner, with some fresh veggies (from Winco) steamed and thrown in, side of leftover brown rice from the evening before. We often shop at Goodwill. Yes, I have a college degree - and the student loan payments still to prove it.

Please DO NOT ask me to pity this criminal who sits smugly in this picture wearing his ridiculously expensive designer jacket, smoking his cigarette, while my taxes pay for his medical care, housing, food, and smoking habit.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 10:37AM

jw1967 says...

This guy is a bum who had his chance and wasted it, plain and simple. Now we get to pay for his health problems? Unbelievable. I'm surprised he isn't suing somebody... the hospital, the city, the tobacco companies....what a joke. Being compassionate only goes so far. I try to put time or \$ into worthy causes. Its people who tried but still are in need that are worthy of our support. Not bums who caused their own misery. Maybe if we kick out illegal immigrants this man can find a job and get back on his feet. At least then he'd be trying and worthy of assistance. Maybe instead of paying for and helping illegals we will have more to help our own.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 11:58AM

zippy700 says...

Mr. Perez, and all the other entitled 'victims' of society would get much more sympathy if they EVER said a quote along the lines of:

"I know I've made some mistakes along the way and I am very grateful for the care I have received when I had no ability to pay."

Not the typical "Give me more!" speak we see SO frequently.

But that would mean he and others would have to take personal responsibility...sigh.

Who has time for that..got a cigarette?

Posted on 03/25/09 at 12:59PM

ctesiphon says...

nice f***** jacket, moron. diabetic smoker who had to have his foot amputated, hmmm, didn't see that coming. thank god our society is there to give him a "helping" hand so he can continue to engage in behavior detrimental to his dumb-ass at our expense. way to go! let's keep encouraging people like him to keep scamming the system so we can feel good about ourselves in the morning. what a crock of s***.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 1:51PM

Sophlady says...

I support the program. But, I hope that Perez and other sex criminals are being monitored. There's a high risk they will use their new stability to go back to their old ways.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 4:53PM

Sophlady says...

When I posted my prior comment there seemed to be only one other. The hateful remarks appeared later. They deserve responses.

Chays is both small-minded and ill-informed. Her children are not guaranteed safety because she more or less imprisons them. In fact, most mental health problems, abuse, and injuries occur within families. I certainly don't advise hanging out with sex offenders, but one should be aware that a family member, friend or acquaintance is just as likely to be one as a stranger.

renpilgrim should not be working in an emergency room. An employee who holds patients in contempt will shortchange them in various ways, including discharging them when they should not be. That could lead to massive liability for the hospital. Furthermore, you can't tell how ill someone is by jumping to conclusions about their social status. I once fell and injured my bad knee again while running in a park in Eugene. If someone like renpilgrim had been working the desk at the only hospital I'm sure I would have gotten short shrift wearing a tee shirt, shorts and scruffy running shoes.

All of the complainers: We pay for the Perezes one way or another. If he were still in prison we would pay for that. If he were still making monthly visits to ERs, we would pay for that. If he were living in relatively useless run of the mill homeless shelters instead of getting real care, we would pay for that, too. The current situation is better because it limits costs and, could, in some cases of chronic failure, lead to a turnaround.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 5:17PM

Sophlady says...

I forgot to address the jacket. I suspect it was donated. I've donated nice things to William Temple House and Goodwill myself. The remarks make me suspect the people making them don't donate to charities, or, they would know the likely source of Perez' clothes.

Posted on 03/25/09 at 5:26PM

Lynne97030 says...

Thanks, sophlady, for your compassion.

As someone who suffers from disabling mental health issues caused by employers and who can no longer work, I'd like to respond specifically to jeffie79 (the second comment) and then to the rest of you self-centered remoras.

A call to emergency services for help from someone suffering from mental illness is not a BS call. Mental illness can be every bit as life threatening as physical injuries. Many of the emergency calls paramedics receive are indeed alcohol-related, and alcohol is a legal substance. Should your car be hit by a drunk driver, is it BS that paramedics respond to help you?

No one, regardless of the mistakes he or she has made in the past, deserves to be left to die on the streets. The resources used by people like Perez are not what's bankrupting the healthcare system -- what's bankrupting the healthcare system and our government along with it are the obscene profits made by the top 1%. We worship the rich in this country. We'd rather fund a stadium so some rich man can play at sports mogul before he writes his toys off in bankruptcy than make sure the most desperate and destitute have the chance to regain their place as constructive members of society.

Posted on 03/27/09 at 4:11PM

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