

# Staff News

Oregon Department of Human Services Employee Newsletter

## DHS epidemiologists solve Salmonella mystery

### Make weight loss long-term

*Is weight loss one of your New Year's resolutions?*

*When you are ready to lose weight, consider approaching it as a lifestyle change rather than a "diet."*

*Here are some tips for successful long-term weight loss.*

- *Savor your food! Slow down and chew and taste each bite.*
- *Remove distractions like TV; play soothing music or have a conversation with your family instead.*
- *Pre-portion the amount you're going to eat, rather than eating directly from a bag or box.*
- *Dish-up dinner plates in the kitchen and force yourself to get up from the table if you eat seconds. Leaving serving dishes on the table promotes overeating.*
- *Plan to stop eating before you feel full – give your body a chance to realize it is actually full before you feel stuffed and uncomfortable.*
- *Eat small amounts throughout the day and keep a supply of healthful snacks at hand.*

**DHSuccess**

An outbreak of Salmonella infections in Oregon in late 2003 set in motion a disease investigation by DHS Public Health epidemiologists, which was the subject of a December article in a national journal.

DHS epidemiologist **Sean Schafer** and his colleagues were called in after 18 cases of salmonellosis were lab-confirmed. It is estimated that hundreds became ill in several Western states.

Finding the source of the infection was a real challenge, involving "shoe-leather" epidemiology – snooping around deli cases and repeatedly interviewing ill persons.

The persistence of the DHS team finally paid off, with identification of the cause of the problem as contaminated commercially processed egg salad from a California manufacturer.

Undercooked eggs are a common source of Salmonella infections, although commercially processed eggs are rarely implicated. With the manufacturer cooperating, a multi-state recall was issued, likely preventing a number of additional illnesses.

Schafer and his colleagues wrote an article detailing the outbreak, which was featured in a December issue of the MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report), a widely read online publication of the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The article, which is highly technical in nature, can be found here on the CDC's Web site.

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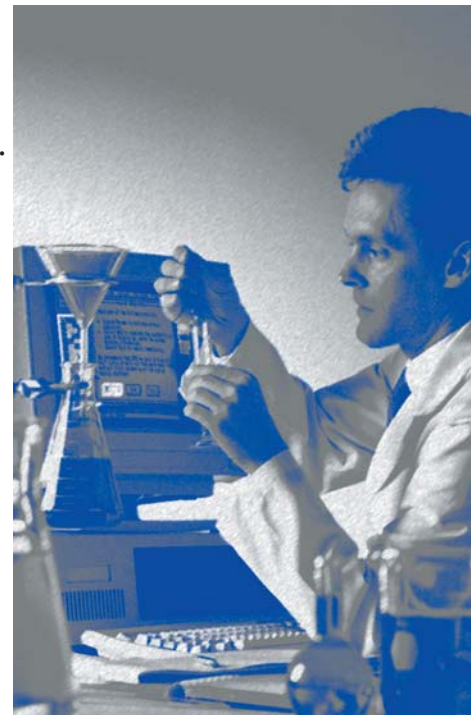


Photo illustration by Genene Valleau

# DHS, Lung Association focus on smokefree bars

To bring attention to the dangers of secondhand smoke, DHS public health officials and the American Lung Association of Oregon (ALAO) are partnering this New Year's on a "people's choice" award for smokefree bars and taverns in the Portland, Medford and Bend areas.

Votes can be cast at the ALAO Web site or by sending an email to: [choosesmokefree@yahoo.com](mailto:choosesmokefree@yahoo.com)

Voters will automatically be entered into a drawing to win a smokefree entertainment package. Winners will be announced Valentine's Day. Participants must be 21 or older to win.

"Our goal is to draw attention to dangers posed by secondhand smoke," says **Mel Kohn, M.D.**, DHS state epidemiologist. "We want to provide information to assist people with making healthy choices."

## An encouraging trend

More than 500 bars and restaurant-bar combinations in six Oregon counties are now smokefree, which public health officials welcome as

an encouraging trend toward protecting Oregonians from the hazards of secondhand smoke.

The smokefree restaurant-bar combinations and bars are in the Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Benton, Lane and Jackson counties, the only areas for which numbers are known.

"Secondhand smoke causes an estimated 800 deaths a year in Oregon," Kohn says. "As people prepare to celebrate New Year's, it is important to remember they have choices." DHS manages the state Tobacco Prevention and Education Program, financed by voter-approved tobacco taxes.

Medical authorities say that secondhand smoke contains a complex mixture of more than 200 toxins, including lead, the deadly poison arsenic and cancer-causing formaldehyde.

Experts have found that just 30 minutes of secondhand smoke exposure can impair blood flow to and from the heart in non-smokers. Longer-term exposure to non-smokers increases the risk of heart disease by up to 60 percent and lung cancer between 20 and 30 percent.

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*Mel Kohn*

## Retirements for November 2004

Employees who retired in November, and their years of service:

### Administrative Services

Joann D. Hall, 28 years

### Children, Adults & Families

Mary F. Ashcraft, 30 years      Patricia M. Ehresmann, 28 years  
Ruby L. Haynes, 15 years

### Seniors & People with Disabilities

Rachel M. Ulrich, 20 years      Michael C. Summers, 30 years

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