

LANE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY | OCTOBER 2024

# MEDICAL MATTERS

## Loaning A Hand

From refugee to physician, Dr. Loan Duong dedicates herself to underserved communities in Vietnam.



**Charcuterie Board  
with the LCMS  
Board October 10th!**



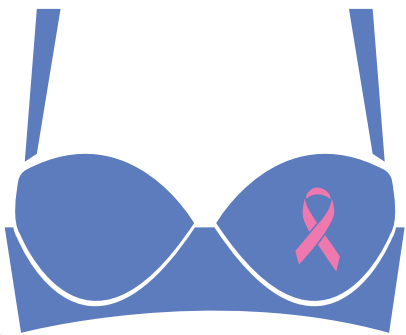
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# Community and Camaraderie

## The 2024 Gala Was a Success!

I sincerely thank everyone who attended the September Wild West Wellness Gala. This fun-filled, memorable event was not only a successful fundraiser for the Physician Wellness Program (PWP), but also a chance for physicians and their peers to foster supportive networks and communicate the challenges they collectively face. Physicians also had the opportunity to take the “pledge to take action for physician well-being.”

The PWP Committee and the LCMS Foundation (LCMSF) collaborate to reduce the stigma around seeking emotional support, prioritize mental health, and remind physicians of readily available mental health resources.

Be sure to check out the November issue for event photos and the final fundraising tally from the evening.

## LCMS Foundation's Role

The LCMSF board has been busy this year completing “housekeeping” tasks, such as bylaws and policies, as well as adding a few new community members to help with successful stewardship. Both the LCMS and the LCMSF boards want to be transparent about their respective roles, responsibilities, and how they plan to work together.

When the conversation first started about the LCMS Foundation board, a few physicians voiced concern that it was not entirely comprised of physicians (like the LCMS board) and that decisions affecting physicians would be made by non-physicians. Rest assured that although this board consists of a combination of physicians and community members, it does not act as the decision-maker for the PWP.

Rather, the PWP Committee will continue recommending and developing new resources and programs, as well as monitor current PWP services, and the LCMSF will help find a way to

fund them.

As LCMS members, any of you are eligible to serve on the PWP committee, and if you're curious about what that entails, consider attending the “Board with the Board” event.

## Board with the Board

This year, we'll host the annual (charcuterie) “Board with the Board” event on October 10th at The District Co-Working Space (see this month's insert). It's an excellent opportunity for any LCMS member to meet with current LCMS board members to learn more about serving on the board or one of our committees, such as the PWP Committee or the Community Health Committee.

The feedback for this informal event has been very positive. Prospective board members found it very helpful to learn more about the organization's mission and how they might contribute.



Photo from the 2023 Winter Social featuring a performance by the Eugene Ballet.

## Winter Social

The 2024 Winter Social/New Member Social is scheduled for November 13th, so mark your calendars! This is not only a relaxing and enjoyable way to finish the year, but it's also a perfect opportunity to welcome and introduce yourselves to new physicians in the area. These intimate events encourage member interactions and convey a sense of community and camaraderie.

## Impact of Dues

In the coming weeks, you'll receive

your 2025 LCMS dues renewal. This is a perfect time for the organization to reflect on recent accomplishments, and explore new opportunities.

As an LCMS member, you can connect with Lane County physicians, participate in mentorship and volunteer opportunities, receive personalized advocacy support on key issues, and access resources through the PWP. You'll also enjoy physician features in the magazine, access the member directory, and attend networking and career development events. LCMS will continue to invest its resources to champion a vibrant and successful healthcare community through:

- Advocating for efforts and policies affecting physicians, healthcare, and the community
- Providing helpful resources and opportunities for connection through our various events, educational opportunities, and programs
- Offering professional development programs like the Physician Leadership Project

I encourage you, as members, to engage more actively with LCMS activities or provide feedback on the services and benefits you'd like to see.

Thank you for your continued membership, support, and guidance of an organization that has been vital to the healthcare community for 135 years! Fun fact: LCMS was established on July 4th, 1889, and is the same age as the City of Eugene. Cheers to the next 135 years!◆



*Shonda*

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# Chart Notes

“Being on the front lines means serving those in need...For many people in third-world countries, healthcare is a privilege, not a right. While we have the luxury of expecting healthcare as a given, they’re focused on survival.”

–DR. LOAN DUONG,  
REFLECTING ON HEALTHCARE  
ACCESSIBILITY IN VIETNAM. SEE  
MEMBER PROFILE ON  
PAGE 16.

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HEALTH DAY IS  
ON OCT 10TH. JOIN  
US IN PROMOTING  
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AWARENESS!**

## Join Us for a Charcuterie Board With the LCMS Board!



**Come have a charcuterie board and network with the LCMS board!** Discover opportunities to serve on the board or get involved with committees like the Physician Wellness Program (PWP) or the

Community Health Committee at our event on Thursday, October 10th, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at The District Co-Working Space, 590 Pearl Street, Eugene. RSVP by emailing [info@lcmedsociety.com](mailto:info@lcmedsociety.com)!



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## Advertise with us in 2025!

**LCMS is now accepting advertising reservations for 2025.**

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- Special pricing offered through the end of 2024

## RESOURCES

### Request for LCMS Support Form.

Members coordinating group events have the option to receive support, which can range from magazine announcements to nominal financial assistance for catering or venue expenses.

### Medical Matters wants your feedback!

Help us in continuing the magazine’s good quality by suggesting new themes or topics for 2025. Email us your ideas today!

### The Physician Wellness Program

Accessible to all active Lane County physicians, offering free counseling without a diagnosis. For appointments, contact Cascade Health at 541-345-2800 to connect with certified counselors.

**For updates from the state,** sign up to join the Oregon Medical Association today. Learn more at the [OMA.org](http://OMA.org).

# Play On the Go

**BY BEV SMITH**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIDSPORTS

This year at Civic Park, Kidsports (KS) hosted an average of 122 kids per day in our half-day and full-day summer camps for six weeks from June to August. While we were able to serve many children through these fun and fundamental summer camps, we recognize that many children and families lack reliable transportation to Civic Park.

For the last four summers, KS has traveled to meet the kids where they are, in neighborhood parks and school sites. Each Friday during July and August, we load up the KS truck and trailer with equipment—from obstacle course features to soccer balls, footballs, dodgeballs, and other fun activities—and take summer camp on the road. Delivering a free mobile “pop-up” day

of play and enhancing access to physical activity. KS hosted pop-up camps at ten different schools and city parks throughout the Eugene/Springfield area. 800 registrants signed up for a day of play at locations in Bethel, 4J, and Springfield.

Camp counselors jumped out of the truck and into the day of play, meeting kids on their own turf. Kids explored the day of play through both unstructured, kid-centric activities as well as structured games focused on age-appropriate play, development, and fun.

Unstructured play gives kids the chance to create their own games, rules, and boundaries, which allows greater engagement, buy-in, and participation. Structured play helps kids to navigate an age-appropriate curriculum that aids in the development of athletic, social, emotional, and

mental skills and resiliency.

The importance of daily physical activity in the lives of children may be just what the doctor ordered. In fact, a 2023 Aspen Institute Community State of Play survey showed that youth connect increased physical activity to better mental health. The report also revealed that children who are physically active reported more excitement, happiness, and motivation. When doctors prescribe an active, healthy, and happy lifestyle, we deliver just that.

KS pop-up camps will be back again next summer. With generous support from the Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance at the University of Oregon and their graduate students, we would also welcome Lane County doctors and pediatricians to get involved and share our program information. Visit [www.kidsports.org](http://www.kidsports.org) to do so. ♦



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◀ Edward Lew, MD, FACEP

# Serve Locally, Affect Globally

**BY GAIL WINTERMAN, RN, MS, CCM**  
HEALTH NAVIGATOR, RCC  
INTEGRATED HEALTH TEAM

Although refugees must have medical clearance to enter the country, many encounter health problems either in the countries they traveled through or after their arrival, often without knowledge of where to find resources.

The Refugee Resettlement Coalition (RRC) and Catholic Community Services' Refugee and Immigrant Services Program (RISP) collaborate to welcome and provide general support to refugees in the area and enroll them in programs such as the Oregon Health Plan. Many have come from Myanmar, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Haiti. The number of refugees in the world far exceeds all countries' capacity to accommodate them.

Advocates and Health Navigators came together to help address the issues of grief and loss. Navigators also find mental health services for a traumatized refugee population. They connect children and families to specialists for special needs, such as cerebral palsy or severe genetic diseases.

For instance, one Navigator conducted research that enabled a family to visit the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and receive testing and counseling. Navigators accompanied people to specialists for conditions such as gallbladder disease, kidney stones, and endemic diseases that need ongoing treatment, such as H. pylori and TB. Cultural attitudes about taking medicine vary, so coaching and a pill organizer are helpful.

"These people have been through

so much trauma. It is rewarding to be able to help them navigate our health system as they enter our community. They are very appreciative of our help and understanding," says Dr. Terry Copperman, MD.

Refugees often arrive from war-torn countries without their families. The stories they are willing to share are sobering. For instance, many of the Afghan men who arrived after the 2021 evacuation have large families to support back home. Balancing multiple jobs and night shifts often puts their nutrition aside, requiring care that considers both their physical and cultural needs upon their arrival.

**"[Refugees] have been through so much trauma. It is rewarding to be able to help them navigate our health system as they enter our community.."**

Our volunteers assist with housing, hosting, collecting supplies, stocking food pantries, practicing English, budgeting, and more. RISP staff meet refugees at the airport, help them sign up for public benefits and OHP, assist with school and ESL enrollment, help refugees find and apply for their first job, provide cultural orientation and more. Navigators as a first point of contact, play a crucial role in

integrating newly arrived refugees into our healthcare system.

A moving example involves a father and son going for a blood draw and the phlebotomist mentioned that he had lost a brother in Afghanistan. The son spoke up and said, "I lost a brother in the war also," finding common ground amid tragedy.

Another refugee, a former engineer who had once helped rescue efforts after an earthquake in Afghanistan, had mysterious symptoms after arriving here, and was ultimately diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. The Healthcare navigator and other volunteers, along with friends, supported him throughout this difficult process.

One day, a Navigator and six men sat in a circle on the floor and shared a meal. The men conversed in Dari as they encouraged the very sick man on the couch to eat a little bit. Grief and loss were palpable as each person thought of their family back home. The Navigator was able to provide a healing presence and help answer questions.

Challenges also include practical needs, like hearing testing. One refugee couldn't attend English classes until she received hearing testing and a hearing aid. Women who may be pregnant and unfamiliar with prenatal care arrive, and Navigators support them as they learn how to ensure a healthy pregnancy. Very few have learned about family planning, so Navigators step in to connect them with services in the community.

Of the more than 100 refugees arriving in the past eight years, most spoke limited or no English. Support is essential as they navigate the often complex pathways for primary and

## HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

dental care, vision and hearing care, surgeries, and various illnesses. The Lane County Community Health Center has partnered with RISP and RRC to fast-track the new arrivals so that they can see a PCP within 30 days, a real success story amid the shortage of providers. Some refugees have never seen a doctor or dentist, so these are meaningful opportunities for adults and children to become strong and stay healthy.

One case involves a former soldier who was injured by shrapnel during the Afghan war. While the Oregon Health Plan covers most healthcare needs, this type of injury wasn't covered. With his Navigator's persistence, physician documentation, and correct billing codes, it was eventually covered.

Navigators often learn how culturally appropriate foods promote health, how to support individuals who are fasting and working extra shifts, how to access language apps and volunteer

interpreters for men and women, and how to listen and be a healing presence for those who want to talk about their experiences and feelings. Volunteers meet regularly to problem-solve, navigate cultural differences, expand their understanding, and improve care.

"I found the refugees we have worked with to be motivated to find work, become independent, and integrate themselves into the community. Their journey is an amazing one of sacrifice, perseverance and trusting the refugee resettlement process. And the children are delightful," says Dr. Randall Lewis.

A refugee's healthcare journey starts with a visit to a primary care provider and continues with testing and treatment. This may include getting x-rays, picking up prescriptions, seeing specialists, or accessing mental health counseling.

The emphasis is on teaching refugees to manage their own healthcare, make office and lab appointments online, use

phone menus and calendars, arrange for transportation, and obtain visit summaries so they can review their next steps.

While volunteers accompany them to initial visits, most refugees become independent within a few months. The stories of hardship are often softened by seeing people receive care they may never have had in their homeland. Beyond healthcare, Navigators can provide human connections and a sense of community for refugees, beyond what a social service agency can provide. Navigators play a pivotal role in helping refugees take their first steps toward a full and healthy life in the United States.◆

*If you are interested in becoming a Healthcare Navigator, General knowledge and experience with how to navigate medical care is required. If interested, contact Gail Winterman at [gwinterman@comcast.net](mailto:gwinterman@comcast.net).*



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# My Role as a Big Brother Overseas

BY ANGEL MONTES

LCMS COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

This summer, I traveled to Asia for the first time to assist in providing care in rural underserved communities. Vietnam greeted me with its vibrant culture, warm generosity, and beautiful city scapes. People were always smiling, eager to help, and their kindness felt genuine. Looking around the city, I couldn't help but notice how similar it was to my parents' hometown in Mexico. Strangely enough, it felt like home.

At the airport, I cliqued with a group of other pre-meds and residents who would become like my family by the end of the trip. While waiting for our flight to Pleiku, I was suddenly escorted away, and everyone thought my visa had an issue. Within five minutes of being in Vietnam, we were all thinking I was being sent back home. Next thing, I found myself in a black Mercedes van, stopping in front of a plane as the driver said, "Have a nice flight!" As confused as I was, turns out I'd accidentally bought a "Sky Boss" first-class ticket for a 30-minute plane ride. I felt embarrassed arriving on a mission trip after flying first class and being served lobster pho. It was the most luxurious yet awkward 30 minutes of my life, but it quickly became a lighthearted joke with everyone.

Upon arrival at the church, we got straight to work, unloading trucks filled with medicine, toys, shoes, and clothing. We met the team, including the dental and medical teams, childcare staff, and several children involved in the church.

While unloading, many of the children eagerly grabbed the heaviest boxes. Some boxes weighed three times their own weight, but they would look at me for my approval, which made me feel like a big brother to them. So I cheered them on

and we competed to see who could grab the most and the heaviest boxes.

During our initial two days of training, we visited a few orphanages. At the first orphanage the children performed a cute dance for us, and halfway through, we joined in. All the kids around me screamed in excitement and laughed knowing that the foreigner had jumped in on their choreographed masterpiece. Soon after, the boys all came to see who could give me the hardest fist bump. I admit I'm surprised some of those ten-year-olds didn't break my hand.



At another orphanage, these children had a wide spectrum of disabilities, were at risk of suicide, or had been abandoned by their parents. A child with developmental delays kept looking at me and would extend his hand to hold mine. He clung tightly anytime I tried leaving. Soon after, he walked around the orphanage holding his big brother's (me) hand, and we walked around handing toys to the children.

For five days straight, we worked from sunrise to sunset. My first role was as a Medical Assistant, charting on paper, prepping lidocaine injections, doing AIC tests, and escorting patients to and from the pharmacy. The most common complaint was "Dao Dao," which translates directly to "pain pain" and is used to refer to headaches. In the waiting area, patients greeted me with

smiles, surprised to see someone who looked different and any held my hand during the entire visit for comfort.

At the end of our workdays, I spent time with the local teens, who loved teasing me. We would play outside in the pouring rain. Their favorite game was a mix of volleyball and hot potato, where dropping the ball meant sitting under a tarp filled with cold rainwater, ready to be drenched. It quickly turned into a team effort to make sure I got soaked every round.

Our "kitchen aunties" or "Co's" never let us go hungry, always piling food on our plates—catfish, pork, shrimp, octopus, rice stuffed into bamboo, translucent spring rolls, dragon fruit, radish, and a durian. As a first timer, they insisted I try everything and give them my rating. In Vietnamese, "Thank you auntie" is "Cam On Cô," but all week I accidentally said "Cam On Cá," which means "Thank you fish," and that's probably why they kept laughing anytime I tried to speak Viet.

By day four, I was preparing doses for trigger point injections and administering them under supervision. We often prescribed gabapentin, omeprazole with Tylenol for suspected ulcers, and our go-to, Dynarub—a cultural cure-all, which was menthol and methyl salicylate, but served as a great placebo to help patients feel better.

Then, I volunteered to run a group Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMR) clinic with some exercises. I'd sit with several patients and focus on the part they had pain the most. We made a "massage train," smiling and laughing as we worked together. Eventually I learned to count to five in Vietnamese (well, sort of)—saying one, two, three, four, năm (five)—to guide patients through exercises. Some felt silly doing the exercises, but one 89-year-old woman even joined me on the bare floor for the

child's pose stretch. She thanked me and took five copies of our exercises to put in each room of her house.

Not all moments were lighthearted. One patient presented with third-degree burns developed keloids that restricted arm mobility. When we asked why she hadn't sought care in the past year, she shared that her husband died in the fire and she couldn't afford treatment. I asked the doctor if I could give her money. Though favoritism is discouraged, I couldn't see past her suffering. When I took out the money, the patient's tears streamed down her face as she held my hand, refusing to take it. I insisted, and as she walked away, she wished me good health. Hearing someone with injuries like hers wishing me good health made everything around me go silent.

The residents and pre-meds would gather in the same room each night. I would walk in and they would say, "Oh hey... Skyboss!" Those nights we reflected on the day's highs and

lows, sharing stories from home, and supported each other through the long week. We laughed, cried, and took turns buying each other boba every single day.



On our last day, we had a large feast with all types of foods like whole grilled chicken, more bamboo rice, crushed peanut seasonings, spicy chile peppers, and my favorite, rice wine. We danced in a circle around the tables, celebrating the end of the week with drums, people from the north mountains (indigenous lands), and all the volunteers. When it was time to eat, there were no utensils; you simply walked around mingling with everyone and ate at different parts of the table.

The rest of the night involved Dr. Don Mackay bringing a 24-pack of Tiger beer, saying, "You get a beer! You get a beer! Everyone gets a beer!" The local volunteers brought out the microphones, and it was time for karaoke. We sang all kinds of songs, shouting and dancing. They even convinced me to get on stage and do a couple of TikTok dances, which is something I'd never seen myself doing back home, but here, I felt like I was in the comfort of my own family. ♦



From left to right: Photo with young fever patient, toys provided for comfort; 2024 Hand-in-Hand Share Missions medical team; leading PMR clinic with patients.

Photos by Hand-in-Hand Share Missions

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# Loaning A Hand

Dr. Loan Duong inspired by her mother, shows her dedication to her home country.

BY ANGEL MONTES  
FOR LANE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

**M**edicine for Loan Duong, DO, is a calling that has taken her back home to areas where healthcare is scarce. “When Vietnam fell to communism, my family escaped in the middle of the night. I was only six and a refugee. My mom told me we were going to a wedding, but instead, we spent three days and nights being chased by pirates who looted ships. At one point, my mom even made me swallow a gold ring so it wouldn’t be stolen,” she adds.

In Dr. Duong’s lifetime, her journey to medicine began with a personal calling and a desire to help and heal those around her. She witnessed her mother’s struggle with asthma from a young age. Some of the most common conditions in Vietnam are GERD, musculoskeletal pain, strokes, hypertension, and heart disease. Asthma isn’t quite on top of the list, so her mom having asthma is critical, especially in a community where 80% of children with asthma-like symptoms are not diagnosed with asthma.<sup>1</sup>

As the first in her family to attend college, her path wasn’t easy. “None of my family wanted me to go to medical school because of how hard it was, and they didn’t want to see me struggle. But I enjoyed the hospital rotations, especially the patient interactions I had,” she recalls.





Dr. Loan Duong and Dr. Don Mackay with their daughter Minh Han outside of a church in Pleiku during the 2024 Hand-in-Hand medical mission.

*Photo by Hand-in-Hand Share Missions*

For her, humanitarian medicine is about being “on the front lines and serving those in need because for many people in third-world countries, healthcare is a privilege, not a right. While we have the luxury of expecting healthcare as a given, they’re focused on survival,” she explains. Her medical missions to Vietnam with Hand-in-Hand Share Missions have been particularly eye-opening.

### Toll of Rural Life on Health

“Most of the people in rural Vietnam are farmers who work without modern technology. They’re out in the fields, bending their backs and necks, using their hands to plant and harvest without any protective gear. It takes a toll on their bodies. You see a lot of arthritis and musculoskeletal pain, even in their 30s,” she shares.

In Vietnam, 1 million children aged 5-17 are involved in child labor, with over half of them engaged in hazardous work.<sup>2</sup> This puts a lot of the population at risk for musculoskeletal issues. One patient’s story sticks with her. “He had fallen and broken his hip, but the injury wasn’t treated properly and one leg became longer than the other,” she recalls. “He couldn’t walk or touch the ground, and the pain was unbearable. He had to drop out of school. I tried to help him get surgery by paying for it, but it was a difficult process and only so much could be done,” she adds.

Recognizing the limitations of short-term missions, Dr. Duong and her team shifted their focus toward education to provide preventive care in their absence.

“In the past, we would go for a week, but what about the other 51 weeks we’re not there? So now, we spend two days doing training and lecturing nuns and midwives, teaching them how to handle common conditions and basic procedures like joint injections and treating lacerations,” she says.

The team also brings medicines for them to use for a few months. As much as providing medicine year-long would be great, it is an expensive and challenging task to take on, and that’s why prevention can sometimes be just as effective as medication, especially when five-day clinics cost over \$75,000, according to founder Tram Nguyen.

### Empowering Communities

The difficulties faced by these communities often extend beyond medical access, with financial constraints sometimes determining life or death. Dr. Duong remembers an elderly man with acute appendicitis who refused emergency care to avoid burdening his family with debt.

“It’s heartbreaking when there is a gamble of survival and financial means,” she reflects. The average monthly salary in rural areas is 4.17 million Vietnamese Dong, which is equivalent to about USD 170.<sup>3</sup>

These trips have given her more than she ever expected. “I went into medicine to help people, but with the changes in healthcare, so much of the focus is on insurance and admin work. It’s easy to burn out and forget why you started. These missions remind me why I went into medicine in the first place and where I came from,” she reflects.

In addition to rekindling her passion, these experiences reinforce the importance of gratitude. “People treasure the work we do, and their smiles remind you of what truly matters. What we take for granted here is everything to them,” she says.

Volunteers and church staff share meals together, a tradition that helps break down barriers and celebrates the spirit of culinary culture. Something as simple as a family meal is often taken for granted in the fast-paced lifestyle of America, where it’s a priority in Vietnam.

### Love and Medicine

Her love for medicine wasn’t the only thing she found during her studies at Western University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP) in Pomona. It was also where she met her husband, Don Mackay. “We both caught something called the ‘love bug,’ and soon after, we married and moved to Oregon to be close to his family,” she says. Dr. Mackay’s family lives in Portland and in Rogue River and right in the middle of that was Eugene, and the couple has practiced here since 2012. This year, both traveled to Vietnam together, working side by side.

“It’s horrible having a wife who’s also a physician—all she talks about is cases... just kidding. But we do talk a lot about work at home. It’s a blessing to share the same passion, have conversations that match, and we truly understand each other,” says Dr. Mackay.

Dr. Duong’s life is much more than that. She has seemingly balanced it between being a mom, and a wife in a dual physician household. “My daughter has the chance to see what life is like firsthand as a doctor... well, from two doctors,” she jokes. But her two children, Minh Han (8), Minh Hien (3) mean everything to her.

“Being a mom is hard work, and I have so much respect for single mothers because they are the front-line workers for their children. My mother was a single mother. We try to find ways to stay connected as a family. This trip allows us to serve and stay close. This year we celebrated my daughter’s birthday on the rooftop of a hotel with the mission’s volunteers as one big family,” she adds.

At the end of the day, it’s about building connections, empowering communities, and serving those in need while finding meaning in the work she loves, alongside her family. “Medicine overseas doesn’t just help the patients, it helps me too,” she says. ♦

1. “Burden of asthma-like symptoms and a lack of recognition of asthma in Vietnamese children,” PubMed, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35427209/#:~:text=Over%2080%25%20of%20symptomatic%20children,in%20Vietnamese%20middle%20school%20children.>

2. “Viet Nam’s child labour rate lower than region’s average by 2 percentage points,” International Labour Organization [www.ilo.org/resource/news/viet-nams-child-labour-rate-lower-regions-average-2-percentage-points#:~:text=HANOI%20%E2%80%93%20Viet%20Nam’s%20second%20National,are%20working%20in%20hazardous%20conditions.](http://www.ilo.org/resource/news/viet-nams-child-labour-rate-lower-regions-average-2-percentage-points#:~:text=HANOI%20%E2%80%93%20Viet%20Nam’s%20second%20National,are%20working%20in%20hazardous%20conditions.)

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# Culturally Responsive Care

**BY LISANDRA GUZMAN, MD, MPH**  
LANE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH,  
DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

When Sofia (name changed for privacy), a middle-aged Latinx woman, walked into our mobile Sexual Wellness Clinic, her anxiety was evident as she appeared restless, her palms were sweaty, and she avoided making eye contact.

Her husband had recently tested positive for HIV, and despite her commitment throughout their marriage, she knew she needed to get tested herself. Sofia's distress was compounded by the stigma surrounding HIV in her community, as well as her limited English proficiency. She was hesitant to share her fears, worrying that she would be judged or misunderstood.

Recognizing her vulnerability, I greeted Sofia in Spanish and immediately eased her tension. I used language that was empathetic and respectful, acknowledging her emotions and validating her concerns. Instead of using clinical terms, I spoke about “cuidar de tu salud” (taking care of your health), a phrase that resonated with her culturally and felt less intimidating. This approach helped Sofia feel understood and respected, rather than judged or scrutinized.

## Introducing PrEP: A Sensitive Conversation

After Sofia's HIV test came back negative, I introduced Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) as a preventative measure against HIV. I explained that PrEP was not about questioning her relationship, but about empowering her to protect her health. It was a proactive step to ensure her safety, regardless of the circumstances. By presenting PrEP as a form of self-care, I was able to honor Sofia's values while providing her with the best possible care.

## Importance of Culturally Responsive Medicine

The stigma surrounding sex in Latinx cultures is rooted in a complex mix of religious teachings, cultural norms, and societal expectations. These factors often make open discussions about sex difficult within the community, which leads to challenges in addressing sexual health and education. To provide culturally sensitive care, it's essential to understand these dynamics. Education should respect the cultural values of individuals while promoting their well-being.

Sofia's story illustrates the power of culturally responsive care. It's more than just acknowledging differences—it's about a deliberate commitment to respecting and celebrating each individual's unique background. It involves recognizing how intersecting identities—such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality—impact health outcomes and patient experiences. Culturally responsive medicine isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. It requires active listening, ongoing learning, and adaptability. It's about meeting patients where they are, understanding their social contexts, and tailoring care that aligns with their values and beliefs.

For instance, when Latinx patients share their use of herbal remedies for chronic pain, we listen respectfully and consider how to integrate their practices into our treatment plans. By fostering a healthcare environment that values diversity and inclusivity, we can dismantle the systemic barriers contributing to health inequities. Research consistently shows that culturally responsive care leads to improved health outcomes, increased patient satisfaction, and reduced healthcare costs.

When patients feel seen and understood, they are more likely to engage in preventive care and adhere

to treatment plans, which leads to healthier communities.

## A Call to Action

However, achieving health equity requires more than good intentions—it demands concrete action. To my fellow physicians in Lane County, I urge you to embrace culturally responsive medicine. Invest time in educating yourself about the unique needs of diverse populations. Advocate for policies that promote inclusivity and address social determinants of health. Build partnerships with community leaders and activists to foster trust and bridge gaps in healthcare access.

In Lane County, we witness the disparities that exist. Many in our BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities confront historical trauma, discrimination, and socioeconomic challenges that exacerbate health disparities. Our mobile clinics, hosted by Lane County Public Health, serve as lifelines for these underserved populations. They offer more than just medical care; they provide a safe space where identities are respected, native languages are spoken, and cultures are embraced.

## The Path Forward

Sofia's experience reflects the broader challenges many patients face in accessing culturally competent care. As healthcare providers, we have the power to make a difference, one patient at a time. We must challenge ourselves to do better and act boldly in our pursuit of equity.

By committing to culturally responsive care, we not only improve individual outcomes, but also contribute to a more equitable and compassionate healthcare system. Let Sofia's story inspire us to listen more, learn more, and do more for our patients, regardless of where they come from or what language they speak. ♦

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GERALD AGGREY, MD

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*Pictured: Gamma Knife radiosurgery device.*

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# At the Right Place at the Right Time

BY JIM MUREZ

PEACEHEALTH COMMUNICATIONS

Jenn Salter, MSN RN, was trying to keep up with one of the busiest nights she could remember as house supervisor at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend when her phone suddenly rang.

It was the emergency department charge nurse on the line. “A mom is giving birth right now in front of the hospital’s Oregon Heart and Vascular Institute (OHVI) entrance,” she said and asked if Salter could go see what was happening.

That day was anything but typical for Salter, but her fast action and safe delivery of a newborn baby boy is emblematic of the approach her colleagues consistently bring to their jobs when it comes to providing care to patients.



Photo of baby Onyx with China Lim at the Labor & Delivery department.

“Our caregivers, especially those who are the first to interact with our patients, often face unpredictable situations throughout their day,” said Chief Hospital Executive Jim McGovern, MD.

“They are also the best in their field and routinely face stressful cases such

as these with compassion while applying their expertise. I am proud of the quick thinking by Jenn Salter and the others who helped in this successful and quite special delivery,” he adds.

“This is just one example of how our caregivers respond on a regular basis when faced with an emergency—they humbly step up and do what needs to be done,” McGovern says. “We are blessed with a great team in our Oregon network.”

That night, Salter happened to be in her office and close to the OHVI entrance. It was one of the lucky breaks in a series of events that would result in Salter delivering little Onyx Brodale into the world in the hospital breezeway on August 11th, shortly before 4:30 a.m.

“I had a voice inside my head that just said, ‘run,’” Salter said of her reaction upon receiving the call. “I got to the sliding glass doors, and sure enough, there’s a small SUV there, and the dad is clearly relieved to see me.”

China Lim, the mom-to-be, was in the front seat, and the baby was already presenting when Salter arrived.

“I thought, ‘Oh, boy, we are literally having a baby right now,’” Salter said. “There was really no stopping at this point. I told Mom, ‘I’ve got you, and we’ll get through this together.’”

She put on the gloves that the little voice inside her told her to put into her pocket an hour earlier. Leaning on her training, she focused and thought about all of the “what-ifs” as Onyx made his way into the world.

A couple of pushes later, and it was all over. Everything went perfect. Everyone was healthy, with no complications and Salter handed Onyx to his mom, allowing her to hold him against her chest.

“It was one of those textbook deliveries minus it being in the front seat of a car,” Salter joked.

Staff from the emergency department soon arrived. Salter, along with the ED physician, then clamped the umbilical cord. The baby’s father, Parker Brodale, cut the cord right there in the front seat of their Honda CRV. The staff then whisked the new family off to Labor and Delivery.



Photo of nurse Jenn Salter at the entrance of Oregon Heart and Vascular Institute.

Salter’s colleagues couldn’t believe how calm she was after she told them she had just delivered a baby just outside the OHVI doors.

“The stars aligned and I felt like I was meant to be there for them,” Salter said. “I’m glad I listened to that voice,” she said. “I think we were both glad to have her there and that it wasn’t just my partner having to do it himself,” Lim added.

This wasn’t Salter’s first delivery. She worked as a doula earlier in her career, but this was her first full solo birth, showcasing her involvement in frontline medicine by addressing a critical situation on her own.

Later that night, she visited mom and baby and was glad to see both were doing well.

“I will forever be a part of this kiddo’s birth story,” she said. “It was an honor to be there.”◆



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# Tactical Emergency Casualty Care and the Art of Practicing Nonmaleficence in Harm's Way

BY JEREMY ACKERMAN, MD, PHD

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION JOURNAL OF ETHICS

## An Accidental Tactical Physician

I had no plans to become a tactical physician, yet, here I am, with body armor, gas mask, weapons, and badge. I have now deployed with my team for more than 50 operations, including service of high-risk warrants, protection of well-known public figures, mass gatherings, and riots. What I have learned and experienced underscores the benefits of physicians' roles in the field, especially in helping officer colleagues balance potential harms of use of force against securing community safety.

Unlike many physicians who practice tactical medicine, I had no prior emergency medical service, law enforcement, or military experience. Instead, I started by looking for a police officer to collaborate on a firearm injury prevention project. The police department had resources that we, hospital emergency medicine physicians, needed for our project, and we hoped an enthusiastic officer would help. Our project moved forward, and in return I began working with officers from a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. I quickly realized I needed to improve my own firearm skills and tactical knowledge. I understood little about law enforcement and tactical team functioning and needed my team members to teach me. Over the next year, I trained regularly with the SWAT team—my team. I had to participate fully in the training to learn my role as a tactical physician so as to gain my

team's trust. My trauma and emergency department experience did not apply directly in the field, particularly when I was faced with ongoing potential threats. I learned the established protocols of tactical emergency casualty care (TECC),<sup>1</sup> which are designed for this setting. I earned the nicknamed "Doc," which, in the tactical world, expresses not only a professional qualification, but also trust and respect. By my fourth mission, I could don my body armor unassisted, and I had streamlined my medical pack to fit the cramped and now comfortably familiar space of our armored truck.

In this article, I discuss physicians' work with law enforcement personnel in field-based operations, with special attention to the role of physicians in assessing potential risks and benefits of tactical teams intervening to promote community safety.

## Trigger Discipline

One role of tactical physicians was impressed upon me by a memorable mission to arrest a suspect with a particularly long and violent criminal career. At the mission briefing we learned that he was heavily armed and had posted threats to police and others on social media. I watched my team enter his home, emerging a short time later with the suspect in our custody. One of my officers walked past me and said, "Doc, with you out here, it's easier to keep my finger off the trigger."

Firearm safety rules always include some variation of "ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot."<sup>2</sup> Known as trigger discipline,

this rule is key in civilian, military, and law enforcement firearm training. We know from countless "accidental," "unintentional," or "negligent" shootings that a finger on a trigger is almost always the proximal cause of harm. We also know that even well-trained, experienced firearm operators can neglect trigger discipline when stressed or threatened. My officer's remark made me more fully appreciate how my role in mitigating risk of harm to bystanders, suspects, officers, and communities extends far beyond providing care.

## Warm and Hot Zone Demands

In addition to serving arrest and search warrants or responding to hostage and barricade situations, tactical teams also assist security details for high-profile events (eg, National Football League Super Bowl games). When assigned as a quick response unit for an event, our role is primarily to respond to a potential mass casualty incident (MCI), such as a terrorist attack or the presence of an active shooter, and to prevent further deaths or injuries. In every mission, we divide the scene into zones—the hot zone where the threat is, the warm zone where the threat could go, and the cold zone (which is probably safe). When my team is making an arrest or serving a warrant, I remain in a protected location: the cold zone. But when my team responds to a potential MCI, there is no safe place; I need to move with my team into the warm or hot zone.

Anyone in the warm or hot zone is vulnerable. Our team moves rapidly to secure these zones and to stop ongoing

1. "Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC): Course Manual. Jones & Bartlett Learning," Jones & Bartlett Learning, [www.jems.com/content/dam/jems/PDFs/JEMSSupplement-TCC.pdf#page=12](http://www.jems.com/content/dam/jems/PDFs/JEMSSupplement-TCC.pdf#page=12)

2. "NRA gun safety rules," National Rifle Association, [gunsafetyrules.nra.org/](http://gunsafetyrules.nra.org/)

3. "Facilitating the Medical Response Into an Active Shooter Hot Zone," Naval Postgraduate School, [core.ac.uk/download/pdf/45464749.pdf](http://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/45464749.pdf)

threats. Conventional emergency medical services will not go into the hot zone where the threat is or the warm zone where an active shooter or new threats could emerge at any time. Concern for securing the safety of the scene from ongoing threats is a common reason why medical response is delayed in MCIs.<sup>3</sup> The principles of TECC dictate that only minimal and immediately lifesaving interventions be performed in the warm zone, where emphasis is placed on rapid evacuation to the cold zone. Because these situations are dynamic, zone classification can change rapidly and the TECC priorities shift as a result. Because in the hot zone the priority is stopping the threat, when I am working with my team as part of a quick response unit for an event, it is essential for me to be armed. Review of relevant law and department policies had taught me that I could only be armed in the role of helping to stop threats if I became a sworn officer. I balanced the obligation I felt to serve my team and the public on the front line against the risks inherent in committing to enter warmer zones, and I enrolled in the police academy.

### Nonmaleficence and TECC

For many, the idea of an armed physician serving as part of a tactical unit conflicts with the dictum “first, do no harm.” As scholars have noted, this dictum is not actually a part of the Hippocratic Oath and conflicts with how modern medicine is practiced.<sup>4</sup> An armed tactical physician dramatically exemplifies the fine balance of risks at the heart of how modern medicine must be practiced. Any health intervention carries at least some risk of iatrogenic

harm; such risk can only be avoided entirely by avoiding any intervention. Weighing the risks and benefits of intervening is done in policing as well as medicine. In addition to providing medical care, part of my role as a tactical physician is to augment my team’s capacity for ethical reflection and serve as a sort of medical conscience. To that end, I help the team weigh potential risks and benefits of actions’ effects on bystanders, suspects, officers, and communities, just as I do so often with patients and their loved ones.

Fundamental to TECC is that, within a hot zone or a warm zone, the greatest threat arises not from victims’ injuries or conditions but from the potential for additional deaths and injuries. A point at which risk of injury or death warrants use of force, including deadly force, must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Just as an oncologist might escalate or stop an intervention based on a patient’s responses, so tactical teams must dynamically assess the appropriateness of using any kind of force—including discharging a firearm—based on the situation, as specified in the International Association of Chiefs of Police Code of Ethics.<sup>5</sup> As members of tactical teams, physicians working in warm zones have responsibilities, just like other team members, to be trained and prepared to properly use force if needed and to be prepared and skilled in contributing to deliberations about prospective risks and benefits of using force.

### Harm’s Way

The number of deaths caused by iatrogenic harm (including errors) in health care<sup>6</sup> is staggering compared to the number of deaths caused by law enforcement personnel.<sup>7</sup> Beyond the raw

numbers, the critical ethical point is that all members of a tactical team subject themselves, their colleagues, and those whom they seek to serve and protect to the consequences—positive and negative—of tactical and ethical decisions they make in the field. Obviously, I’m not saying that physicians should ever intentionally place themselves in positions that necessitate use of force without providing benefit. What I am saying is that being armed and being skilled in wielding a firearm is key to being a good tactical colleague and to contributing to the creation of an environment in which early critical medical assessment and intervention can be done. Although still debatable, the use of force by any individual even a physician—in self-defense or in defense of others has long standing legal and even religious support.<sup>8, 9</sup> Physicians entering warm zones looking to provide care must assume the risk of possibly needing to take life to preserve life.

When I completed police training, I earned a badge and became an officer sworn to serve and protect our community. I bring my experiences to students and colleagues who are in both law enforcement and health care. Although I hope I never have to use my weapon in the field, I appreciate that it enables me to provide care—at dire times and under austere conditions—to patients for whom such care would otherwise be inaccessible.◆

*This article was sourced from the AMA Journal of Ethics website at <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/tactical-emergency-casualty-care-and-art-practicing-nonmaleficence-harms-way/2022-02>*

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# Building for Health

For 69 years, Chambers Construction has been a trusted partner in the construction industry, helping build and reshape the local commercial landscape. With a particular focus on the medical industry, we have completed a variety of projects, including new construction, remodels, and tenant infills. Our team's experience and dedication allow us to meet the unique demands of healthcare facilities, ensuring that each space is built to support both practitioners and their patients.

## **Expertise in Medical Construction**

The construction of medical facilities and clinics requires a specialized approach, one that balances the technical demands of healthcare with the need for a welcoming and safe environment. From state-of-the-art treatment facilities to primary care and surgical clinics, we understand the importance of these spaces and how they serve our community.

One of the key challenges in medical construction is adhering to stringent regulations. Our team is experienced in navigating these complexities, ensuring that every project meets necessary codes and standards, such as those for infection control, patient privacy, and medical equipment requirements. Whether it's a sensitive remodel of an active healthcare facility, or a tenant improvement project to repurpose existing spaces, our work is always guided by the needs of the providers and their patients. Our focus is always on creating environments that promote healing and comfort, ensuring that patients feel at ease as soon as they walk through the door.

## **Remodels for a Changing Healthcare Landscape**

Healthcare is constantly evolving, and existing facilities often require renovations to keep up with advancements in technology and patient care. Remodeling a medical office presents its own set of challenges, particularly when the facility remains operational during construction. Our team has developed a proven process for working in active medical environments, minimizing disruption to patients and staff while maintaining the highest levels of safety and cleanliness.

One notable recent remodel project involved a technically complex and intricate vault designed to house Oregon Urology Institute's new linear accelerator. The remodel incorporated the latest medical technologies while optimizing the layout for improved workflow and patient care. By coordinating closely with staff, we ensured the project was completed on time and with minimal disruption to ongoing operations.

## **Tenant Infills: Maximizing Space for Healthcare Providers**

In addition to new builds and remodels, we have extensive experience with tenant infill projects for medical practices. These projects involve transforming existing commercial spaces—such as offices or retail locations—into fully functioning healthcare facilities. Tenant infills are particularly valuable for healthcare providers looking to expand quickly or set up satellite locations in underserved areas.

We work closely with medical tenants to understand their specific needs, ensuring that the space is designed to accommodate the required equipment and patient flow. From dental offices to urgent care centers, we specialize in converting spaces into high-functioning

medical environments that meet all industry standards while retaining a welcoming atmosphere.

## **Supporting Local Non-Profits and Healthcare Access**

Beyond our work in commercial construction, our company is deeply committed to supporting local non-profit organizations, particularly those that focus on health and wellness. We believe everyone deserves access to quality healthcare, and we partner with organizations, such as Oregon Cancer Foundation, Volunteers in Medicine, and HIV Alliance that help people overcome barriers to medical care.

This month, for example, our company has entered another team-built bra for the Oregon Cancer Foundation's Bras for Cause annual fundraiser, benefitting local cancer patients (Vote at [brasforcause.com](http://brasforcause.com) for "Lift Your Spirits UP."). Commitment like this to our community is at the heart of everything we do.

## **A Legacy of Excellence**

As we look back on our nearly 70 years in business, we take pride in the lasting impact our projects have had on our local healthcare infrastructure. Each medical construction project represents more than just a building; it's a place where lives are saved, and communities are strengthened. We approach every project with the same care and dedication, knowing that the spaces we create will serve patients and providers for years to come.

Our team remains committed to delivering high-quality construction projects that meet the evolving needs of the local medical industry. And, as our community continues to grow and change, we are honored to play a role in building the future of healthcare in our area. ♦

# Beautiful Rooms Begin at Imperial Floors

For over 50 years, Imperial Flooring America has been Eugene, Oregon's first choice in floor coverings. When the doors first opened on May 1st, 1970, the team at Imperial Floors never could have expected the sense of community, friendship, and longevity that the business would come to know in "The Emerald City."

Imperial Floors has been family owned and operated since 1982 when Keith Gubrud purchased the business. Doug Gubrud, Keith's son, has been carrying on the family legacy in his home city after graduating from the University of Oregon in 1984.

Imperial Floors offers comprehensive

in-home services and are very experienced in commercial and residential property management with over 260 combined years of experience. Our showroom contains flooring materials from industry-leading manufacturers, including luxury vinyl, laminate, carpeting, hardwood, and tile.

Our team of dedicated flooring professionals is delighted and eager to get to know each of our customers and help with all flooring and interior design needs. We look forward to meeting you and helping you with your current or upcoming flooring needs.

As an Oregon small business, Imperial Floors strives to support the

community through programs and charities that benefit our residents. We currently proudly sponsor The Angel Hair Foundation, a private, local nonprofit that helps children who have suffered from hair loss due to medical illnesses such as cancer. We actively encourage our customers to support the foundation in providing hair systems to children in need.

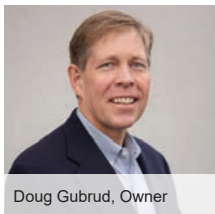
We are committed to our community, and to serving our customers, generation after generation, with the best possible products and services. Our goal is your satisfaction. We look forward to serving you.◆



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# Announcements

## New Members

**Patricia Ahlen, MD**  
Retired

**Katelynn Baska, DO**  
Emergency Medicine  
Cascade Medical Associates  
1460 G St  
Springfield, 97424  
P: 541-726-4510  
F: 541-747-9764

**Mark Dewsnup, MD**  
Anesthesiology  
Northwest Anesthesia  
Physicians, PC  
939 Harlow Rd Ste 110  
Springfield, OR 97477  
P: 541-686-9551  
F: 541-687-6716

**Allen Johnson, MD**  
Retired

**Jason Newman, MD**  
Ophthalmology  
Eugene Eye Care  
992 Country Club Rd STE 101  
Eugene, 97401  
P: 541-687-1715  
F: 541-687-1690

**Asmey Penington, DO**  
Emergency Medicine  
Eugene Emergency Physicians  
PO BOX 5920  
Eugene, 97405  
P: 541-344-8757  
F: 541-683-2527

**Andrew Rice, MD**  
Neurology  
Oregon Neurology  
1 Hayden Bridge Way  
Springfield, 97477  
P: 541-868-9430  
F: 541-868-9450

**Rebekah Wieland, MD**  
Pathology  
Pathology Consultants, PC  
PO Box 72059  
Springfield, 97475  
P: 541-222-6915  
F: 541-222-6908

## LCMS Events

**Join us for a charcuterie board and networking with the LCMS board!** Learn about exciting opportunities and explore roles within LCMS on Thursday, October 10, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at The District Co-Working Space, 590 Pearl Street, Eugene.

**Save the date for the 2024 Winter Social/New Member Social on November 13th!** Mingle with colleagues at the last LCMS event of the year and get ready for the winter season. Stay tuned for the location and time!

**Looking for personalized counseling and advice?** Our new peer mentorship program connects you with LCMS community members who offer one-on-one support on business, well-being, legal topics, and more. Email us to be matched with a mentor today.

**Stay tuned for our monthly social events, hosted by our PWP committee members.** These casual gatherings are a great chance to connect, unwind, and engage with the LCMS community!

## Community

**Clinical Community Conversation CME Series**  
Lane County Public Health holds a weekly virtual meeting for community clinicians every Monday at 4:00 PM, focusing on public health response efforts in Lane County. This meeting is eligible for 1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 credit. To attend, please contact Danielle Keller at 541-682-8763 or [danielle.keller@lanecountyor.gov](mailto:danielle.keller@lanecountyor.gov).

**Get ready for Haunted Hult, an 80s retro Halloween Party presented by Eugene Ballet and the Hult Center!** This adults-only Halloween bash on Oct. 31st features live music from Shelley James & AGENTS OF UNITY, a sneak peek of Mowgli: The Jungle Book Ballet, a costume contest, and a photo booth for spooky memories. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Proceeds support Access to Dance, helping low-income families access the arts.

**The Rivers to Ridges Partnership collaborates to protect, restore, and manage open spaces in the southern Willamette Valley.** Join the Eugene Parks Foundation's Parks Talk on Tuesday, October 29th, from 5:30-7:00 PM at The Shedd Institute, where landscape architect Jeff Krueger will highlight 20 years of accomplishments and discuss the updated regional vision.

Reserve your spot at Eugene Parks Foundation. Small plates and drinks will be served.

## Notes

**Congratulations to LCMS Deputy Executive Director, Kianna Cabuco,** for being recognized by the Eugene Chamber as one of the area's 20 Under 40 rising leaders!



## Classified Advertising

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## A personal space for cancer patients

When the **Oregon Cancer Foundation** moved to their location at the Oakway Center, they wanted to have a space where cancer patients could be fitted for complimentary wigs and also receive hats, scarves and other accessories during their treatment. Chambers Construction teamed up with local subcontractors and donated the materials and labor to build what is now the **Believe Boutique**.

Location: Eugene, OR  
Completed: August 2020



BRAS FOR  
CAUSE

Please join us during the month of October as we raise funds for the Oregon Cancer Foundation. Vote for our bra entry in Bras for Cause, "**Lift Your Spirits UP**" \$1 = 1 vote and all funds raised support local cancer patients. [brasforcause.org](https://brasforcause.org)



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# MEDICAL MATTERS

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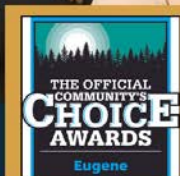


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