

**Contact:**

Jean Ann Van Krevelen  
Cascade AIDS Project  
[jvankrevelen@cascadesaids.org](mailto:jvankrevelen@cascadesaids.org)  
(503) 223-5907  
cell (503) 412-9837

## **RUSSELL STREET DENTAL CLINIC CLOSURE WILL HURT PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS**

PORTLAND, Ore. (January 30, 2008) – Cascade AIDS Project strongly objects to a plan reported on January 18 for Oregon Health Sciences University to close Portland’s Russell Street Dental Clinic and northeastern Oregon’s Union Family Health Center. Meanwhile, OHSU has not released specifics about the closures, so patients continue to be seen at both clinics. CAP has requested a meeting with OHSU president Joe Robertson to discuss the surprise announcement but has not received a response to date.

“The closure of Russell Street would be a disaster for 3,700 low-income Portland area residents, including 650 people living with HIV/AIDS, who rely on the clinic for their dental care and treatment,” according to CAP Executive Director Jean Ann Van Krevelen. “Cascade AIDS Project is asking to partner with OHSU to ensure that Russell Street remains open. Frankly, we cannot understand why OHSU would want to take this drastic step, especially since the clinic’s finances are stable.”

According to Russell Street Dental Clinic director Dr. Robert Johnson, the clinic began suffering losses in 2005 after Multnomah County cancelled their \$1.1 million contract. The clinic adjusted to this difficult reality, revising its fee schedules and business practices to balance their budget.

“After taking difficult but necessary measures in 2004 to increase revenue and decrease expenses, the annual deficit each year since 2005 has declined,” says Dr. Johnson. “The operating deficit for 2007 was about \$60,000. Our actuals have met or exceeded our business plan, so we expect to break even in 2008. We are in solid shape.”

In addition to serving as the leading dental provider for people living with HIV in the Portland area, Russell Street Dental Clinic also trains dentists and dental hygienists about how to care for people living with HIV, who often present with complex oral health

problems. Untreated dental problems can result in serious infections for people with compromised immune systems, according to Dr. Johnson.

“Russell Street Dental Clinic has been a part of this community since the very beginning of the AIDS crisis,” says Van Krevelen. “We are approaching this challenge with the assumption that OHSU will join us to ensure that the clinic continues to operate on Russell Street as long as we have low-income people living with HIV who need its services.”

### **About Cascade AIDS Project**

Cascade AIDS Project has provided community-based HIV services including housing and education to those living in Oregon and SW Washington since 1985. More than 6,000 families in CAP’s service area have a loved one living with HIV. Last year, CAP supported 2,624 people with HIV/AIDS and their affected family members including 407 children. CAP educated nearly 29,000 individuals about HIV prevention, 44 percent of whom were children and youth. Part of making this possible is the devotion of CAP volunteers; 660 youth and adult volunteers gave 20,936 hours of service. For more on CAP, visit [cascadeaids.org](http://cascadeaids.org).

###