

Minnesota > Medical trends

Companies launching on-site health clinics

Care costs less, workers more productive, proponents say

By **Jeremy Olson**
jolson@pioneerpress.com

Wilson Tool in White Bear Lake has joined a growing list of companies trying to control health care costs by building

their own medical clinics. The manufacturer opened an on-site clinic Wednesday that will provide free primary care to its 450 workers and their families. Two workers showed up right away, and one with

pneumonia sought care during Thursday's ribbon-cutting. Company officials said the fixed cost of providing a clinic will be cheaper than paying sporadically for care at other clinics. The convenient loca-

tion also may encourage workers to seek care before they develop more serious and expensive illnesses. "We can see what health care costs are doing to them and to the company," said Wilson Tool President Bob Haskins. "We knew we needed to do more than we were doing."

The clinic is part of a national comeback for the company doctor. Many businesses employed doctors until the mid-20th century, when workers came to view them as henchmen making medical decisions that served only corporate interests. The company doctor of that

era was hired only to assess work-related injuries and illnesses, said Dr. Marcus Thygeson of HealthPartners, the Bloomington-based health system that staffs the Wilson Tool clinic. Today's version is much more concerned with improv-

COMPANY CLINICS, 5B >

Eagan



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Aquatic surgeon Amy Kizer gives Oyster, a female adult Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, a checkup Wednesday at Underwater Adventures at the Mall of America. At left is Blake Ericksen, an aquarist and diver at the aquarium. Kizer works part time at Underwater Adventures.

If it lives in water, she can heal it

Vet specializes in aquatic creatures, developing innovative treatments.

By **Maricella Miranda**
mmiranda@pioneerpress.com

A surgeonfish lies in a foam trough on an operating table. Anesthesia-spiked water runs through the flat, oval, blue fish's gills, making it sleeper and sleeper. A few thrashes and the marine animal is sedated — the surgery can begin. Veterinarian Amy Kizer stitches an artificial skin graft on top of its infected cheek. Kizer is testing how to better heal body infections when fish are in water. It's not her first attempt at shattering traditional veterinary medicine. As a respected fish guru, Kizer has performed stingray Caesareans, removed tumors from goldfish, inserted a feeding tube into an eel and even spayed trout. "There's not really a set rule for this," she said. The 34-year-old vet now is transferring her fish insight to pet fish at the Lexington Pet Clinic, her new practice in Eagan. No fish should be doomed to the toilet, she says. That's how husband and wife Andy Harwood and Cheryllyne Vaz feel about their school of Koi. In two years, their

FISH DOCTOR, 5B >

RNC aftermath > St. Paul

City won't prosecute legitimate journalists

But each charge will be decided individually

By **Dave Orrick**
dorrick@pioneerpress.com

St. Paul won't prosecute journalists who were arrested and cited with misdemeanors while "just doing their job" during the Republican National Convention, Mayor Chris Coleman said Friday.

"This broadly reflects the ideals of the city with regards to the role journalists play," Coleman said in an interview. He said the move in no way indicates any second-guessing of police actions during the RNC. The city's announcement was welcomed by a number of media

outlets and advocacy groups. But many said they still want answers for why journalists were arrested in the first place. "This is an important first step, but many questions remain," said Nancy Doyle Brown of Twin Cities Media Alliance. City officials also announced that charges were dropped against Amy Goodman, host of the left-leaning "Democracy Now!"

show as well as two of her producers. Goodman's arrest became a cause celebre among media advocacy groups, although the circumstances of her arrest were unique because she challenged a police line. City Attorney John Choi said no decisions have been made on any other individual journalists. As many as 50 journalists were

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Senate debate schedule set



Sen. Norm Coleman Republican
Al Franken Democrat
Dean Barkley Independence Party

You've seen them hash it out in television ads, you've read about them going at it in news conferences. Now, the candidates in the Minnesota Senate race have set the schedule to take up their disputes in person in debates. Here's the date, place and sponsor for each debate between Republican Sen. Norm Coleman, Democrat Al Franken and the Independence Party's Dean Barkley:

- Oct. 5; Rochester; Debate Minnesota
- Oct. 11; Twin Cities; Debate Minnesota, KARE-TV and Kare11.com
- Oct. 16; Duluth; Debate Minnesota
- Oct. 24; St. Paul; Twin Cities Public Television
- Nov. 2; St. Paul; Minnesota Public Radio

The candidates have agreed that they will not accept other debate invitations and that the first three debates will include two-minute answers and one-minute rebuttals. The exact venues for the first three debates haven't been determined.

In the Senate race two years ago, there were six debates.

— Rachel E. Stassen-Berger

Burnsville

Woman forced to drown baby, attorney says

Trial opens with defense blaming former boyfriend

By **Maricella Miranda and Frederick Melo**
Pioneer Press

Samantha Ann Heiges had a sock in her mouth to muffle her screams as she went through labor in the bathtub of her Burnsville apartment, her attorney said Friday in Dakota County District Court.

When Heiges' daughter was born, her boyfriend would not let her lift the baby out of the water, and the baby drowned, the attorney said.

Heiges, 22, went on trial Friday on murder charges. The former Coon Rapids resident was charged with second-degree murder with the intent to kill, along with an alternative count of first-degree manslaughter while being coerced by threats. If convicted, she faces up to 40 years in prison.

Defense attorney Deborah Ellis told a jury Heiges was forced to kill her baby in May 2005 by the father, Erik Matlock, who was abusive to

DROWNING TRIAL, 5B >

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