Oregon same-sex couples can register as domestic partners beginning Jan. 1

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Same-sex couples will soon be able to register as legally recognized domestic partners, following passage of the Oregon Family Fairness Act by the 2007 Legislature. The law goes into effect Jan. 1, 2008, and couples can file forms with county clerks starting Jan. 2, said Jennifer Woodward, State Registrar in the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) Public Health Division. Declaration of Domestic Partnership forms and information will be available beginning New Year's Day on the agencyâ€™s web site. Forms will be available at county clerks' offices throughout the state beginning Jan. 2. County clerk office locations are listed in the white pages of the telephone book under the County Government section. After Jan. 1, forms can be obtained via mail from the DHS Center for Health Statistics, Attn: Mary Ann Jensen, 800 N.E. Oregon St., Suite 225, Portland, OR 97232; or requested via e-mail. "Because this is a legal form, it's important for applicants to read the accompanying instructions for completing it," said Woodward. The completed, signed and notarized forms can be registered at any county clerk's office. Certified copies of the declaration filed at the county can be purchased when filed, or at any time after the declaration is registered. Contact the county clerk's office for fee information. On a monthly basis, county clerks will send registered Declaration of Domestic Partnership forms to the DHS Center for Health Statistics where they will be filed as vital records. Certified vital record copies of declarations filed at the Center for Health Statistics can be purchased by family members, legal representatives, or persons or organizations with a personal or property right. Cost is $20 for a first copy and $15 for each additional copy ordered at the same time. Woodward advises individuals to allow six weeks after the record is registered with the County Clerk to allow time for the record to be transferred to the Center for Health Statistics and entered into the vital records system.