

New priest from page 1A

The Pontiac native received his master's degree in social work from Wayne State University. He worked 25 years in the profession, doing everything from marriage counseling to being the first male social worker at Sarah Fisher.

He also worked in community mental health and had his own practice as a psychotherapist.

On a day-to-day basis, he dealt with others' emotional turmoil. He listened and prescribed help. Though he never married, life had been good. There were opportunities.

"They never materialized," O'Dea said. "I guess it wasn't meant to be."

O'Dea built a retirement home in Waterford Township and had a cabin up north.

Then four years ago, O'Dea was talking to then-Archbishop Ed-

mund Szoka, a former classmate from Sacred Heart. He asked O'Dea about coming back into the priesthood.

O'Dea didn't take the idea seriously at first, bringing up his age. "He smiled at me and said, 'You're never too old to do God's work,'" O'Dea said.

So, at 60-something, O'Dea found himself at Sacred Heart Major Seminary with some students half his age. He crammed

five years of studies into two years, doing ministerial studies at Our Lady Queen of All Saints in Fraser.

On weekends, O'Dea also helped administer sacraments as a transitional deacon at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Monroe.

His role at Our Lady of Sorrows has yet to evolve. Likely, he'll dispense advice in the way he did as a counselor.

"Counseling is totally different," he said. "There, you are being an advisor. As a counselor, you will see a person three months, six months or a year. In the priesthood, there's not enough of us to do that work."

Which is part of the reason why people like O'Dea are becoming priests. The trend is growing.

For example, Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Cor-

ners, Wis., is exclusively for candidates who choose the vocation as a second career. The average age in the seminary is 43.

"I would say people like Loren would be the exception, but there are candidates like Loren around the country," said Monsignor William Easton, who is vice rector at Sacred Heart Major Seminary.

"Our experience is the majority of candidates would be in their mid- to late 20s."

"We're finding half the fellows come into the seminary around the country already have a college degree and a few years in the work force."

O'Dea sees it as coming full circle. He likens his experience of joining the priesthood to a flower coming into full bloom.

He's ready for the challenge.

"I don't think I'll rust out or burn out," O'Dea said.

Bills

from page 7A

Gerald Robbins, president of the Michigan Osteopathic Society, and a Garden City neurologist, said cutting liability costs will help keep young doctors who train in Michigan from moving away.

Engler said it was fitting that he sign the bills at Beaumont — "one of the nation's busiest hospitals." Local legislators in attendance included state Sen. Michael Bouchard, R-Birmingham, Rep. Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak and Jamian.

Beaumont is the closest full-service hospital to the Birmingham area, with a separate rehabilitation facility — the Barnum Center — just south of downtown Birmingham.

Beaumont also has a hospital facility in Troy as well as a medical office center in West Bloomfield.

Targets lawsuits

The new legislation is aimed at curbing lawsuits against health care personnel — and thus liability insurance costs. It's tied to 11 bills tightening discipline of health care professionals, first introduced in the House by Jamian.

When the House and Senate agreed on each other's amendments, it broke an 11-year deadlock.

The final Senate roll call was 27 to 11, with 20 Republicans and seven Democrats voting yes while nine Democrats and two Republicans voted no.

Local senators voting yes were Republicans Bouchard, Mat Dunaskias of Lake Orion, and David Honigman of West Bloomfield.

Voting no was Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills. Two Republicans broke ranks to vote no — Fred Dillingham of Fowlerville, who is nearing a complete separation from the GOP, and Doug Carl of Utica.

The bill embodies the Republican philosophy of controlling legal costs and rejects the Democratic philosophy of direct price controls on insurance premiums.

The battle in favor was led by outstate senators from both parties who complained that Michigan's lawsuit happy climate drove physicians out of the state.

What it does

The medical malpractice law:

- Sets \$250,000 caps on "pain and suffering" awards (non-economic damages) for many torts.

- Restricts "expert" witnesses to those who devote 80 percent of their time to active practice or teaching. It's designed to crack down on non-practicing, out-of-state experts who testify for a living.

- Restricts attorneys' fees to a smaller percentage of higher awards, giving trial lawyers an incentive to seek astronomical awards.

- Sets time limits on when suits could be filed on behalf of children.

The licensing/discipline laws:

- Speed up the disciplinary process.

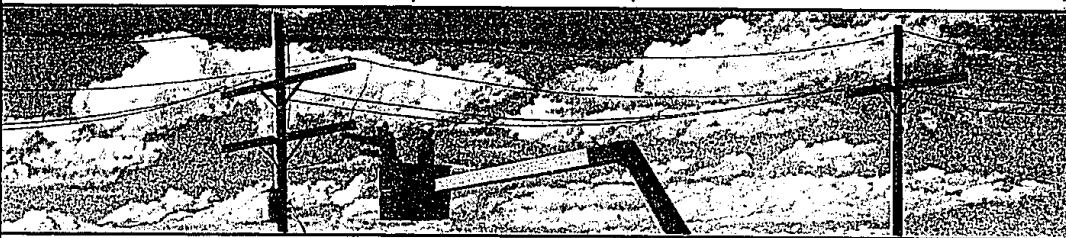
- Create disciplinary subcommittees led by public members that can suspend or revoke licenses or registrations.

- Add public representatives on health professional boards.

- Establish a recovery committee to help impaired health professionals resolve substance abuse problems.

Engler also signed a bill streamlining the Certificate of Need program for hospitals. It focus was changed to concentrate on large expensive projects while eliminating the burden of excessive regulations on small, rural hospitals.

Here's what we're doing in Southeastern Michigan to improve your service down the line.



We want your electric service to be something you never have to think about.

So we're checking all the circuits in your area, all the way up to your home. We're using infrared cameras to find hot spots in the lines. We're using ultrasound to check the condition of the poles. We've added more than 1,200 contract personnel to get the job done quickly and efficiently. It's all part of our continuing commitment to provide the best electric service possible for you, your neighbors, and all of our customers.

For more information, see the Bright Ideas newsletter included with your bill.

And remember, the number to call to ask questions or report outages is

1-800-477-4747.

We're keeping you posted.

Southeastern Michigan	TOTAL	IDENTIFIED FOR 1992-93 IMPROVEMENT	IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETED
Miles of line	26,974	15,957	10,840
Number of poles	954,405	174,781	108,572
Number of circuits	2,461	1,140	764

Detroit Edison
A good part of your life.