

The AIDS PROJECT News

P.O. BOX 10723

JUNE 1986

PORTLAND, ME 04101

"CYCLE FOR LIFE" A BIG SUCCESS

The Maine section of the "Cycle for Life" fundraiser for the national AIDS hotline (AIDS-800) and local AIDS service organizations was an immense success. Beginning in Bangor on May 12, as many as 15 riders (on various parts of the route) were instrumental in raising over \$4000. Money from pledges for miles covered will go directly to AIDS-800; money raised at receptions held in Bangor, Lewiston, and Portland will go to groups such as the Central Maine Health Foundation and the Maine Health Foundation. Many thanks have to go to the riders, their pledge sponsors, the reception hosts and organizers, and especially to Michael Rossetti of Massachusetts who arranged for Maine to become a part of this national event.

A side benefit of the Maine "Cycle for Life" was a goodly amount of media attention. Both Lewiston and Portland newspapers and television stations covered the event. The AIDS Project would like to thank all the new media stars for their courage in publicly coming out.

The following is a letter from the American Red Cross Blood Services, Northeast Region:

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to receive your newsletter which keeps us informed about activities in Maine.

As you know, there is reliable evidence that individuals in groups at risk for AIDS have been refraining from donating blood in order to obtain the anti-HTLV III test. No doubt the availability of alternative test sites has been a factor in this.

It is important, however, to continue to let risk groups know they should not donate blood.

It has come to our attention that because all donated blood is tested for anti-HTLV III, some people who are at risk may think that it is OK now to donate since positive blood will be identified and discarded. For the following reasons, we wish to continue to stress self-deferral of people at risk for AIDS:

1. No clinical test is 100% perfect.
2. A person who has been exposed and infected by the virus may not have produced sufficient antibody to be detected at the time of donation.

As blood banks, our goals are to protect both donor and blood recipient, and to maintain the safest possible blood supply.

We very much would appreciate your help in conveying this message via the Newsletter.

---Blanche R. Lansky, Director, Community Services

High risk groups, as defined by the U.S. Public Health Service, include:

- * Homosexual and bisexual men
- * Present and past intravenous drug users
- * People with signs and symptoms compatible with AIDS or a less serious disease, AIDS-related complex
- * People born in Haiti and countries in Central Africa
- * Male or female prostitutes
- * Sex partners of infected people or of people at increased risk
- * Hemophiliacs who have received blood-clotting factor products
- * Newborn children of infected mothers

Alternate test sites in Maine are located in the following communities:

- * Bangor--STD Clinic, 947-0700
- * Biddeford--STD Clinic, 283-1090
- * Lewiston/Auburn--The Clinic, 783-5308
- * Portland--STD Clinic, 775-5451, ex 383

People wanting to learn their antibody status can also go to the Fenway Community Health Center in Boston (16 Haviland St., 617-267-7573).

A SPECIAL NOTE: The AIDS Project has been asked by a few individuals who have been tested and who are negative if they can donate blood. We urge anyone, even those who are seronegative to HTLV III, who are members of any of the high risk groups to NOT GIVE BLOOD period. We applaud people wanting to help their community by giving blood, and suggest that they find other ways to give a part of themselves to helping others.

For more information about antibody testing call any of the numbers listed above, your local Red Cross Blood Service, the Lewiston AIDS Hotline (782-6113) or the AIDS-Line 1-800-851-AIDS.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST:

June 6-7 The AIDS ACTION COMMITTEE, 661 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116, is hosting "Meeting the Mental Health Challenge of AIDS and Related Disorders". Many workshops are planned, including:

- * Treatment of people with AIDS on the medical unit
- * Interview techniques with people with AIDS
- * Relaxation techniques for people with AIDS
- * Treatment of couples with AIDS and AIDS related issues.

If you would like to attend, send \$100 to AAC, Mental Health Conference Committee, at the above address.

June 12 The Bureau of Health, the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance, and the Maine Public Health Association are sponsoring a teleconference from U Mass on public policy and public issues around AIDS. This will take place at Westbrook College in Portland from 12-4:30 p.m. There is no fee for attending.

On-going Support Group Meetings for people with AIDS, ARC, or who are seropositive. Call the AIDS-Line for details.

CURRENT MAINE STATISTICS

(NOTE: These statistics are current as of 5/15/86. Recording of such information began 12/84. These are only cases of AIDS.)

Total number of AIDS cases: 20 (3 northern, 4 central, 13 southern)
11 of the 20 have died.

Ages: 5 have been between 20-29
10 have been between 30-39
5 have been between 40-49

Risk Groups: Gay/bisexual men---19
IV drug user-----1

Primary Diagnosis: 10 had pneumocystis carinii pneumonia
5 had Kaposi's sarcoma
1 had both PCP and KS
2 had toxoplasmosis
1 had candida
1 had lymphoma

Nationally, as of May 5, there have been 20,305 cases of AIDS;
10,933 people have died.

The following comes from the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, 333
Valencia St., 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103 (415-863-AIDS):

A SPECIAL APPEAL TO MEN OVER 45

Some people have the mistaken notion that AIDS is a young man's disease--that older men aren't at great risk of contracting AIDS.

The statistics indicate otherwise. There are cases of AIDS among newborn babies and cases of AIDS among gay men in their eighties. AIDS does not discriminate on the basis of age (or race, gender, or sexual orientation).

In San Francisco, 35 percent of men with AIDS are over 40. Nearly 10 percent of San Francisco AIDS cases are found in men 50 and older. By contrast, only 15 percent of people with AIDS here are in their twenties.

Studies conducted for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation by a professional research firm indicate that men over 45 in San Francisco, compared to any other demographic group in the local gay or bisexual population, tend to be less knowledgeable about AIDS prevention, and more likely to engage in anonymous Unsafe Sex than their younger counterparts.

We urge men over 45 to reassess their risk of contracting AIDS and to help spread the word to their contemporaries: MEN OVER 45 ARE DEFINITELY AT RISK FOR AIDS. It's the sexual activity you engage in that counts, not how old you are. Please protect yourself and your partners from AIDS.

REMEMBER: AT THE AIDS-Line (775-1267 or 1-800-851-AIDS)

Assistance - Information - Direction - Support

IS BUT A PHONE CALL AWAY.

The AIDS Project would like to know if your organization, agency, business, hospital, etc. has a policy on AIDS. If so, would you please send a copy to us? Indicate whether or not we can print part or all of any policy in the AP NEWS. (NOTE: Information began 12/84. These are only.)

CHANGES-----The AIDS Project is looking for a new Health Education Coordinator (currently a volunteer position) and a new AIDS-Line Coordinator (a paid position). For a job discription or more information, please write us. Ages: 2 have been between 10-12

The support services group and the AIDS-Line are looking for more volunteers. If interested, call the AIDS-Line. The support services group also needs donations of clothing, household goods, etc. Call the AIDS-Line or 773-5540. IV drug user-----1

This information just in from the State Bureau of Health, STD Services:
From 7/85 to 4/86 1009 Maine people have been tested for antibody to HTLV III. Only 56 were indeed antibody positive (6% of all tested).

P.O. BOX 10723
PORTLAND, ME 04104

BULK RATE
THIRD CLASS MAIL
U.S. Postage PAID
Portland, Me. 04101
Permit #417

A SPECIAL APPEAL TO MEN OVER 45

Some people have the mistaken notion that AIDS is a young man's disease--that older men aren't at great risk of contracting AIDS. The statistics indicate otherwise. There are cases of AIDS among newborn babies and cases of AIDS among gay men in their eighties. AIDS does not discriminate on the basis of age (or race, gender, or sexual orientation).

In San Francisco, 35 percent of men with AIDS are over 40. Nearly 10 percent of San Francisco AIDS cases are found in men 50 and older. By contrast, only 15 percent of people with AIDS have a history of drug use.

Studies conducted for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation by a professional research firm indicate that men over 45 in San Francisco, compared to any other demographic group in the local gay or bisexual population, tend to be less knowledgeable about AIDS prevention, and more likely to engage in anonymous unsafe sex than their younger counterparts.

We urge men over 45 to reassess their risk of contracting AIDS and to help spread the word to their contemporaries: MEN OVER 45 ARE DEFINITELY AT RISK FOR AIDS. It's the sexual activity you engage in that counts, not how old you are. Please protect yourself and your partners from AIDS.

REMEMBER: AT THE AIDS-Line (775-1267 or 1-800-851-AIDS)

Assistance - Information - Direction - Support

IS BUT A PHONE CALL AWAY.