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The AIDS PROJECT News

P.O. Box 10723

JULY, 1986

Portland, ME 04104

JUSTICE DEPT. RULING LIMITS PROTECTION

Since the advent of AIDS there has been an on-going debate amongst legal authorities as to whether or not AIDS is a handicap under Federal law. If so, workers infected with the AIDS virus would be protected from discrimination in the workplace via the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. (Such has been the belief in Maine that a provision in the recently passed AIDS bill, LD 2367, that would have prevented employer discrimination was removed because it was felt that there was ample legal protection.) After a ruling this week by the Justice Department, it now appears that the worker who has frank AIDS would have some protection, but not so a person with AIDS Related Complex or who merely carries the AIDS virus.

"To be sure," the opinion said; "a carrier of a contagious disease may suffer adverse social and professional consequences. Persons susceptible to the disease may be reluctant to associate with him, but a person cannot be regarded as handicapped simply because others shun his company." (New York Times, 6/23/86). According to Asst. Attorney General Charles J. Cooper: "The vast majority of people who (carry the AIDS virus) are not themselves affected at all by the disease. They are simply carriers of it; they are not handicapped; they don't have the disease." (Portland Press Herald, 6/24/86). The Justice Dept. has now made a distinction between "the disabling effects of AIDS and the ability to spread the condition to others." (New York Times, 6/23/86). Thus an employer could fire a worker who has the AIDS virus on the basis of a concern that that worker could somehow transmit the AIDS virus in the workplace. It would then be up to the employee to prove that he is not a health risk to others.

The rationale at work here belies the U.S. Public Health Services own scientific and medical evidence that supports the fact that AIDS cannot be casually transmitted. For AIDS to be "communicated" (the Justice Dept.'s term) in the workplace, the exchange of blood and semen would have to take place. Since that is highly unlikely the Justice Dept.'s concerns about transmission is irrational. By not affording all people with an AIDS virus infection equal protection under the law, the Justice Dept. is in essence allowing employers to make decisions based on fear of AIDS and not on the USPHS facts on AIDS. This new danger to the civil rights of people who have AIDS virus infections will probably mean that fewer and fewer people will request the HTLV-III antibody screening. Such screening is encouraged by the USPHS (and Maine's Bureau of Health) for people at high risk for possible exposure to the virus. Thus it seems that the Justice Dept. has raised a serious obstacle to any effort to encourage such testing.

This ruling will surely be tested in court. Until then, the AIDS Project would caution people from taking the HTLV-III screening test if there is any doubt that the confidentiality of their results could be breached (this is protected by Maine law); and if you have been tested, you had best keep the results a secret from your employer and your fellow employees.

AIDS VIGIL ATTRACTS CROWD, MEDIA

Portland's participation in the third annual AIDS Candlelight Vigil (internationally organized by the California based Mobilization Against AIDS, locally organized by the AIDS Project) drew over 60 people to Monument Square and to a memorial service at First Parish Church. Held on Memorial Day, May 26, the observers stood in a silent circle holding candles for fifteen minutes. The memorial service followed and was conducted by the Rev. Richard Hasty. Attending the vigil and service were people from as far away as Orono and a State Representative from Brunswick. Press coverage was given by radio station WPOR, tv stations WGME and WCSH, and the Portland Press Herald.

AIDS Policy & Law, Vol. 1, No. 9, 5/21/86, reports that the American Medical Association is going to be starting a pilot program to train physicians on AIDS issues. "The program will identify 'core physician educators' who will bring local doctors 'up to speed' on AIDS issues." Plans are to have such a program in place in 46 states by year's end.

The Support Group for people with an AIDS virus infection was looking for a place to meet last April. It was suggested that the First Parish Church on Congress St., which has a history of providing space to groups of many kinds, might be a possible site. A meeting was held there. When members of the congregation expressed concern over the risk of any possible communicability of the AIDS virus from the group's use of the facilities, the church invited AIDS experts to present testimony to the Steering Committee and other church members. As a result of this meeting, groups or individuals with AIDS virus infections will not be prohibited from use of the church. The AIDS Project would like to thank the Rev. Richard Hasty and the members of First Parish Church on making a decision based on sound scientific and medical facts.

The following information comes from the Official Newsletter of the National Coalition of Gay STD Services, Vol 7:4, April/May 1986. Articles for the Newsletter, or inquiries about membership or subscriptions may be addressed to Mark P. Behar, PA-C, Chairperson, NCGSTDS, P.O. Box 239, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0239 (414/277-7671).

GOVT. BROCHURE ON AIDS DISTRIBUTED TO SUPERMARKETS: 5500 supermarkets nationwide will help distribute 500,000 copies a month of a brochure called "Facts About AIDS". The brochure states that the risk of contracting AIDS can be reduced by avoiding multiple sex partners and by using condoms. The CDC will also distribute the brochure to state and local public health centers AT THEIR REQUEST.

TEENAGERS ENGAGE IN ORAL SEX: A university of North Carolina study of high school students (avg. age 16) shows that no fewer than 53% of boys and 42% of girls have had oral sex, giving or receiving cunnilingus more often than fellatio. Oral-genital stimulation is engaged in by 69% of either sex who've had coitus, and also by 25% of virgin boys and 15% of virgin girls.

VIRUS FOUND IN RED BLOOD CELLS, VAGINAL AND CERVICAL SECRETIONS: Scientists tracking AIDS have identified the suspect virus in vaginal and cervical secretions of some antibody-positive women and have found possible signs of it in red blood cells. Though the discovery of the virus in genital secretions does not prove that women can infect men through heterosexual contact, the virus's presence does provide a possible route for transmission. As of March 10, 1986, only 41 cases of suspected female-to-male transmission were reported by the CDC. Constance Wofsy of UC-San Francisco says: "It confirms there is some virus there and therefore the vagina in a nonmenstruating woman could be a potential source of virus exposure. This just gives a little more emphasis to why people should use condoms."

CONDOMS PUSHED IN AUSTRALIAN CINEMAS: Cartoon advertisements urging young people to use condoms will be screened in cinemas and drive-ins from now on as part of a New South Wales Health Department campaign to combat AIDS. (Ads in some theaters also feature AIDS Hotline numbers.) The \$50,000 six-month promotion complemented changes to regulations which had previously forbidden the advertising of condoms and was a forerunner to a major "condom awareness" radio campaign.

Thanks to all the people/groups/organizations/agencies who have sent in copies of thier policies on AIDS. If you have not done so, do so today. The AIDS Project finds these documents useful in addressing areas for increased education and public awareness on AIDS.

A lot of people sign up for the APNews. Some, however, write instead of printing their names, making them difficult to read. Please, if we have misspelled your name let us know.

AIDS-LINE

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

Assistance - Information - Direction - Support
IS BUT A PHONE CALL AWAY.

STATISTICS

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AIDS UPDATE FOR MAINE

*Two confirmed diagnoses from MASS in the mail *

Month June 19, 1986

Number of diagnoses cases 21 *

Southern Maine 14 Central Maine 4 Northern Maine 3

AGE	MALE	FEMALE
13	---	---
13-19	---	---
20-29	<u>6</u>	---
30-39	<u>10</u>	---
40-49	<u>5</u>	---
50	---	---

RISK GROUPS	TOTAL	% TOTAL
Gay/bisexual	<u>20</u>	<u>95</u>
IV substance abuse	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
Hemophilic	---	---
Heterosexual contact	---	---
Transfusion related	---	---
Female prostitute	---	---
TOTAL	---	---

PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS	TOTAL	% TOTAL	% DECEASED
Pneumocystis carinii Penumonia (PCP)	<u>10</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>8 - 80%</u>
Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS)	<u>5</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>2 - 40%</u>
PCP + KS	<u>1</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>0 - 00%</u>
Toxoplasmosis	<u>2</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>1 - 50%</u>
Herpes	---	---	---
Candida	<u>1</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>0 - 00%</u>
Lymphoma	<u>1</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>0 - 00%</u>
Cryptosporidiosis	<u>1</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>0 - 00%</u>
TOTAL	<u>21</u>		<u>11--52%</u>

HTLV-III ANTIBODY TESTS - MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH LAB.

	# OF HTLV-III Specimens	# positive	% positive
May 85	24	9	37.5
June 85	11	4	36.4
July 85	17	4	23.5
August 85	27	1	3.7
Sept. 85	62	5	8.1
Oct. 85	136	13	9.6
Nov. 85	125	8	6.4
Dec. 85	101	9	8.9
Jan. 86	134	2	1.5

Total 637 55 8.6

Feb. 86	127	7	Mar. 86 142
6	4.2		
Apr. 86	127	1	.08
May 86	85	5	5.9

Total 481 19 3.9

TOTALS 1118 74 6.6

VOLUNTEER

The Support Services Network is in need of volunteers. If you would like to be a Buddy to a person with AIDS (PWA), if you would like to contribute a special skill (like cooking, housecleaning, haircutting, transportation, etc.), or if you just want to help, please contact the AIDS Project either in writing, or by calling the AIDS-Line.

Also wanted are people with experience in producing, writing, acting in, etc., visual or audio productions who could help develop radio, print media, and television public service announcements. Ideas are also welcome.

The AIDS Project needs two people: someone to be Treasurer and someone to be Secretary. Interested people would be required to attend Project meetings twice a month. To apply, call Fred at 773-5540, or write us.

Current estimates from the World Health Organization are that, world wide there are over 100,000 cases of AIDS and from 5 to 10 million people infected with the AIDS virus. The CDC reports that, as of June 2, there were 21,302 cases of AIDS in the U.S. of which 9,757 are still living (45%).

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE TO THE AIDS PROJECT NEWS.

IT COSTS US MONEY TO PRODUCE AND MAIL THIS NEWSLETTER. WORKING ON A SMALL BUDGET MEANS WE ARE RAPIDLY RUNNING OUT OF RESOURCES TO KEEP THE NEWSLETTER GOING, AND REQUESTS FOR COPIES ARE ON THE INCREASE. IF ONLY 1/10TH OF THE READERS OF THE NEWSLETTER WOULD SUBSCRIBE, OUR FINANCIAL CONCERNS WOULD BE ABETTED. PLEASE, IF YOU CAN, WHY NOT SUBSCRIBE TODAY. SIMPLY RETURN THE FORM BELOW. AND THANKS.

NAME (Please type or print): _____

ADDRESS (Include zip): _____

PAYMENT ENCLOSED (Circle your choice): \$5 \$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 \$50

Note: Subscriptions run for 1 year (12 issues). THANKS.

WANTED: The Support Services Network is in need of the following:

A washer and dryer (for two men with AIDS sharing an apartment)

Gift certificates to restaurants (so Buddies can provide a socialization experience for PWAs who can't afford to eat out)

Concert, theater, amusement park, ball game, etc., tickets (again socialization experiences for PWAs)

If you can donate any of these items, call Fred at 773-5540, or leave your name and phone number with the AIDS-Line. Gift certificates and tickets can be mailed to the AIDS Project c/o the Support Services Coordinator. Thanks.

NEW VIDEO: The AIDS Project has finally recieved a copy of the Safe Sex video "Chance of a Lifetime" produced for the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City. The film is comprised of three separate stories and will be shown in conjunction with discussion sessions about safe sex. (See CALENDAR)

NEW BOOK: POPPERS & AIDS by John Lauritsen and Hank Wilson. This booklet could have been subtitled "everything you wanted to know". Contains a 34 page annotated bibliography on reports from medical journals and other publications. Available for \$3.95 (postpaid) from PAGAN PRESS, 26 St. Mark's Place, New York City, 10003.

ARTICLES

RECENT ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

From the CDC's MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT:

3/14/86 Vol. 35 No. 10 "Additional Recommendations to Reduce Sexual and Drug Abuse-Related Transmission of HTLV-III/LAV"

4/11/86 Vol. 35 No. 14 "Recommendations for Preventing Transmission of Infection with HTLV-III/LAV during Invasive Procedures"

4/18/86 Vol. 35 No. 15 "Recommended Infection-Control Practices for Dentistry"

From NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC:

June 1986 Vol. 169, No. 6 "Our Immune System: The Wars Within" by Peter Jaret/Photographs by Lennart Nilsson

From the VILLAGE VOICE:

May 27, 1986 "The AIDS Generation". A collection of five articles about heterosexual transmission, the HTLV-III test, a new drug called Compound S or azidothymidine (AZT), alternative therapies, and safe sex (entitled "Better Latex Than Never")

From AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH:

May 1986, Vol. 76, No. 5 "Prevalence of Antibody to LAV/HTLV-III among Homosexual Men in Seattle" by Ann C. Collier, MD, et. al. Study showing that seropositivity was not related to age or number of sexual partners. In the discussion on the findings the researchers advise: "The high incidence of exposure to LAV/HTLV-III among certain populations in an area where overt AIDS is still relatively uncommon provides strong evidence that public health measures to prevent acquisition and transmission of LAV/HTLV-III should be a priority even in areas with low incidences of overt AIDS."

VD UPDATE

In May it was reported that there was a syphilis epidemic in progress. To update things, there are now, approximately, 31 cases state-wide (in May there were 26), of which 26 are in York-Cumberland Counties (in May there were 22). About 1/4 of the cases are in gay males. There have been no new cases of syphilis in gay men reported since May.

In other VDs, Susan Cummings-Lawrence of the Portland STD Clinic says that there have been at least 29 cases of heterosexual gonorrhea so far in June (as of the 25th) in York-Cumberland Counties. This compares to 40 cases reported in April. Only 1 of the June cases has been in a gay man. "That's real good," said Susan.

AIDS TRAINING WORKSHOP, July 9-11, Springfield, MA. This event is especially designed for substance abuse counselors and program administrators. Workshops will focus on designing education programs, counseling seropositive clients, counseling high risk individuals, and developing educational programs for people at high risk for exposure to AIDS. For more information, contact Carlotta James, Div. of Drug Rehabilitation, 150 Tremont St., Boston, MA, 02111 (617) 727-8614.

"Chance of a Lifetime": safe sex film and discussion. Our Books, 4 Pine St., Portland, Thurs. July 17 @ 7 p.m. NOTE: This viewing is open to gay/bisexual men only. Because the film is explicit in its depiction of sexual acts, no one under 18 will be admitted.

NATIONAL BLACK CONFERENCE ON AIDS SET FOR JULY 18: Takes place at the Washington Convention Center; for information contact the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (NCBLG) at 202/737-5276 or 930 F St., NW, Suite 514, Washington, D.C. 20004.

AIDS/ARC: Update '86, July 25-26, San Francisco, CA. For tuition and registration information write c/o Staff Development, Langley Porter Psychiatric Hospital, Box 32B, The Medical Center at U.C.S.F., San Francisco, CA, 94143 or call (415) 476-7360.

The Second Annual AIDS Benefit Auction will be held at The Club in Ogunquit (Rt. 1, downtown) on Wednesday, July 30, at 8 p.m.

Proceeds from the event will be dispersed as follows:

- 50% to New England Deaconess Hospital (for AIDS research)
- 25% to the AIDS Action Committee of Boston
- 25% to the Maine Health Foundation, Inc., of Portland for AIDS work in Maine.

ON-GOING MEETINGS

Support group for people who have an AIDS virus infection; meets every Tuesday in Portland; to join, call Fred at 773-5540.

The Support Services Group will next meet on July 8 at 7 p.m. at Our Books, 4 Pine St., Portland. (Volunteers only)

The AIDS Project's next meeting will be July 10. Call Fred for where and when at 773-5540.

AIDS-Line staff meeting is (tentatively) scheduled for July 23. (Volunteer operators only.)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO MEET SOON

The Committee to Advise the Department of Human Services on AIDS created by LD 2367 will likely have its first meeting in July, or early August at the latest. Knut Ra, from the Bureau of Health's Office on AIDS, says that he will be meeting with Kathy Mudge of the Governor's Office on July 7 to complete the listing of qualified applicants submitted by nominating associations described in the AIDS Bill. Then the Governor will review this list and make his selections. Those appointed will be notified of their selection and a meeting will be called.

Duties of the Advisory Committee include:

Advising DHS on:

- a. content and dissemination of educational materials;
- b. crises that may develop
- c. coordination of services for family and other persons with AIDS, ARC, or seropositivity;
- d. coordination of services for family and other persons with AIDS, ARC, or seropositivity;
- e. AIDS related policy and proposed rules.

The AIDS Project looks forward to this Committee's impending leadership role and will welcome their help in the fight against AIDS.

A.I.D.S. LINE

775-1267

1-800-851-AIDS

The AIDS-Line volunteers were host to Gail Cinnelli, RN, of the Maine Hemophilia Treatment Center (Maine Medical Center, 22 Bramhall St., Portland, ME 04102--(207) 871-2871) at the June staff meeting. Gail described the condition, explained how it is inherited, and discussed issues related to AIDS. Of special interest were the following statistics:

There are about 20,000 hemophiliacs nation-wide; 100 in Maine;

66% of the U.S. hemophiliacs are HTLV-III infected;

There have been 188 cases of AIDS in hemophiliacs;

1-5% of the wives of hemophiliacs convert to being HTLV-III positive each year; such infected women stand anywhere from a 30-60% chance of passing the virus on to a child in the womb; 2 out of 3 babies HTLV-III infected at birth go on to develop AIDS.

Gail also said that the National Hemophilia Foundation does not recommend that hemophiliacs take the HTLV-III antibody test for two primary reasons: the test doesn't tell the person enough; and to avoid any possible discrimination.

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