

THE AIDS PROJECT NEWS

November, 1986 The AIDS Project--P.O. Box 10723, Portland, ME 04104

SURGEON GENERAL ISSUES REPORT

On October 22, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop delivered his long awaited report on AIDS. The 36 page booklet is available by writing to: AIDS, P.O. Box 14252, Washington, D.C. 20044. In his introductory statement made to the press, Koop said:

- * "Controversial and sensitive issues are inherent in the subject of AIDS, and these issues are addressed in my report. Value judgments are absent. This is an objective health & medical report, which I would like every adult & adolescent to read."
- * "AIDS is not spread by casual, non-sexual contact. It is spread by high risk sexual and drug-related behaviors--- behaviors that we can choose to avoid. Every person can reduce the risk of exposure to the AIDS virus through preventive measures that are simple, straightforward, and effective."
- * "It is time to...recognize that we are fighting a disease-- not people. We must control the spread of AIDS, and at the same time offer the best we can to care for those who are sick."
- * "...until every adult and adolescent is informed & knowledgeable about (AIDS), our job of educating will not be done."
- * "Concerted education efforts must be directed to blacks and Hispanics. ...25% of all people with AIDS are black. Another 12% of AIDS patients are Hispanic. 80% of children with AIDS are black or Hispanic."
- * "Many people--especially our youth--are not receiving information that is vital to their future health and well-being because of our reticence in dealing with the subjects of sex, sexual practices, and homosexuality. This silence must end. We can no longer afford to sidestep frank, open discussions about sexual practices--homosexual and heterosexual."
- * "Education about AIDS should start at an early age so that children can grow up knowing the behaviors to avoid to protect themselves from exposure to the AIDS virus."
- * "One place to begin this education is in our schools. AIDS education must start at the lowest grade possible as part of any health and hygiene program. There is now no doubt that we need sex education in schools and that it include information on sexual practices that may put our children at risk for AIDS."
- * "School education on AIDS must be reinforced at home. The role of parents as teachers--both in word and in deed--cannot be overestimated. We have...a responsibility to guide them in avoiding behaviors that may expose them to AIDS."
- * "Before we can educate our children about AIDS, we must educate ourselves. The first thing we have to understand & acknowledge is that AIDS is no longer the concern of any one segment of society."
- * "...the risk of infection increases with increased numbers of sexual partners--male or female. ...unless you know with ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY that your sex partner is not infected with the AIDS virus--through sex or through drug use--you're taking a chance on becoming infected."
- * "Conversely, unless you are ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that you are not carrying the AIDS virus, you must consider the possibility that you can infect others."
- * "...the best protection against infection right now--barring abstinence--is use of a condom. A condom should be used during sexual relations, from start to finish, with anyone whom you know or suspect is infected."

- * "No one will argue that the AIDS epidemic must be contained, and any public health measure that will effectively help to accomplish this goal should be adopted. Neither quarantine or mandatory testing for the AIDS antibody will serve that purpose."
- * "Quarantine has no role in the management of AIDS because AIDS is not spread by casual contact."
- * "Compulsory blood testing is unnecessary, unfeasible, and cost prohibitive."
- * "Much remains to be done to stop this epidemic, and the Public Health Service will continue to work together with all elements of public & private sectors to use all joint resources to the fullest to eradicate AIDS."

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER
by Gary L. Anderson

I am profoundly impressed by Surgeon General Koop's report on AIDS. I have great respect for this man for demonstrating such unheard of national governmental leadership on AIDS. He is the highest ranking health authority in the United States, and he is the first bona fide member of Reagan's administration to so publicly and precisely address some of the many major issues inherent in the fight against AIDS. Hats off to C. Everett Koop.

It is interesting to note how much of the Surgeon General's report isn't all that new. In fact, many of the suggestions Koop makes have already been stated or implemented by the gay community. After all, we have been fighting AIDS for six years now.

(Unlike Dan Rather, we know only too well how AIDS has hit our homes. The title of that CBS News Special a few weeks ago--"AIDS Hits Home"--was as disrespectful and homophobic as Life magazine's infamous cover story in 1985 entitled "Now No One Is Safe From AIDS". In both cases, these 'news' people were alluding to heterosexual cases of AIDS, as if all the gay men who had AIDS and had died from AIDS weren't of any value or interest to society. For the record Dan, and all you folks at Life, no one was ever safe from AIDS, and it always has hit home.)

What is in the Surgeon General's report that is old news to us gay veterans of AIDS?

- * "We are fighting a disease--not people," he says.
---It's time the government noticed.
- * "Many people--especially our youth--are not receiving information that is vital...because of our reticence in dealing with the subjects of sex, sexual practices, and homosexuality," he says.
---I wish I had a dime (to go for AIDS related services) for every time I have heard Dale McCormick, President of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance, utter those very words over the past two years from Kennebunk to Presque Isle.
- * "The best protection against infection right now...is use of a condom," he says.
---No hedging around, no ifs, no buts, nothing but the out and out truth. (Now let's see if he can get condom ads on t.v.).
- * "...unless you are ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that you are not carrying the AIDS virus, you must consider the possibility that you can infect others," he says.
---For years now, that has been the rule of the road for gay men. And the message we have always had to preach to those seeking information about transmission. How many people have we taught to think not only about how they could get an AIDS virus infection (which is what the bulk of the public has been concerned about), but how they could possibly give someone an AIDS virus infection (learning the golden rule of the 80's: Don't do unto others--what would put them at risk for exposure--that you wouldn't let them do unto you--to put you at risk of exposure.)
- * "Compulsory blood testing is unnecessary, unfeasible, and cost prohibitive. Furthermore, rather than aiding in prevention, testing could, in some instances, cause irreparable harm," he says.
---Gee, somebody heard us after all.

AIDS LINE 775-1267
1-800-851-AIDS

NEW AIDS GROUP FORMS

On October 26, a new group known as the Coalition of AIDS Service Providers (CASP) had its first meeting. CASP was conceptualized at the Second Annual Gay and Lesbian Community Summit on AIDS held in September. CASP was formed to address the specific needs of those individuals and groups working directly with PWAs in Maine. Representatives from The AIDS Project, Maine Hospice Council, The AIDS Support Group of Portland, NASW Committee on Lesbian Gay Issues, and the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance, et al, were in attendance. The group, which is encouraging new member organizations to join, defined its initial goals and priorities for the coming year. Among these is the establishment of a statewide network to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information to member groups about treatment and research issues, grant monies, model programs in development, and direct services available to assist PWAs. In addition, CASP plans to establish and maintain a working rapport with funding agencies (including the State of Maine) to assure quality of services available in Maine's AIDS-related programs.

The next CASP meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 19, at 4 p.m., room 208, Luther Bonney Hall, the University of Southern Maine in Portland. (If you do not have a USM parking sticker, do not park in the USM lots or you will be ticketed). For further information, please contact R.J. Bass (236-9593), or The AIDS Project (774-6877).

TAP WELCOMES NEW SSN DIRECTOR

The AIDS Project is pleased to announce that a part-time position as director of the Support Services Network (i.e. the "buddies" group) has been hired. His name is Joshua Noble. Joshua brings many years of social work experience to his new position. He is already providing case management services to PWAs, is reorganizing the "buddies" support group, and is working on a training program for new "buddies." We wish Joshua much success in his new job.

NOTICE:

DUE TO A NUMBER OF DAY-LONG CONFERENCES, TRAINING SESSIONS, AND HOLIDAYS, THE AIDS PROJECT OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS IN NOVEMBER: TUES--11/11; THURS--11/13; THURS--11/20; THURS AND FRI--11/27 & 11/28

CALENDAR

- Nov 3-9: National Days of Prayer and Healing for Those Affected by AIDS, initiated by the Episcopal Church General Convention last fall, and involving member churches of the National Council of Churches.
- Nov. 6: Advisory Committee to the Dept. of Human Services on AIDS meets at the Senator Inn in Augusta, 10:30--2:30.
- Nov. 11: NOVA (PBS) presents: Can AIDS Be Stopped? 8-9 p.m. (check your local PBS affiliate for repeat broadcasts as well).
- Nov. 13: A Symposium on Blood Borne Viral Diseases of Public Health Significance: AIDS and Hepatitis B, Augusta Civic Center, 9-4:30. Call 289-3591 for information.
- Nov. 14: PBS stations: The AIDS Show. (Also repeat broadcasts).
- Nov. 18: AIDS 1986: An Expanding Epidemic, Dr. Michael Bach at USM Campus Center, Portland, 2:30 p.m.
- Nov. 19: Coalition of AIDS Service Providers meets (see article).
- Nov. 20: Living with AIDS in Maine, see enclosed flyer.
- Nov. 21: Preview for Visual AID, One City Center, Portland.
- NOV. 22: Visual AID, an art auction to benefit AIDS research and relief efforts.

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Voluntary — Anonymous — Confidential — Free — Days or Evenings

The AIDS Project now provides trained counselors to answer your questions and address your concerns about possible exposure to the AIDS virus. To schedule a counseling session call: **774-6877**

For more information call:

AIDS-LINE

1-800-851-AIDS

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WANTED: A copy of the June '86 (vol #6) issue of CARING, from the National Association of Home Care. To lend or donate your copy, send it to P.O. Box 10723, Portland, ME 04104. We'd appreciate it.

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