

Give the People Light and they will find their own way.



The Wisconsin Light

New British Study Indicates that AIDS Treatments Do Not Prolong Survival

London, England— Patients in advanced stages of AIDS respond better to treatment drugs than do those who start taking medicine immediately after becoming infected, a new British study found.

The lead investigator, Dr. Mark Poznansky of St. Mary's Hospital in London, said Thursday he hopes the results will provoke debate among experts about "what we are really doing for patients with medical interventions."

In other words: Are the side effects of treatment, such as nausea and vomiting, worth it?

The study of 436 patients, to be published in the *British Medical Journal*, implies that AIDS drugs delay symptoms but do not prolong survival, researchers said.

The question of whether and when to administer AIDS drugs has vexed both doctors and patients, who during the past few years have come to realize that neither a cure nor a vaccine is imminent.

"I think it is pretty clear that there is a benefit but it is small and short-term," said Dr. Henry Sacks, head of the AIDS clinical trials division of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. "I think this study is consistent with that."

The British investigators traced 339 patients who had been taking a variety of AIDS drugs for about three years before getting full-blown AIDS. They compared their survival rate to that of 97 patients who did not seek help until they became very ill.

Those who got treatment early suffered fewer AIDS-related infections. Yet once they got sick, they died, on average, a year sooner than those who did not take any drugs until severe symptoms began.

Sacks said the overall conclusions are similar to findings that emerged in an overview of AIDS studies he published in *The Annals of Internal Medicine* last month.

He would not make any treatment decisions based on the recent findings, he cautioned.

"There are a lot of possible explanations for the differences they found," said Sacks. "It may be differences in the strain of the virus, in the people's general attitudes about health care, or how seriously people take various warning symptoms."

NGLTF's New Survey Shows Anti-Gay Attacks Pervasive Nationwide in 1995

Washington, D.C.— Anti-Gay attacks through state legislation were pervasive during the 1995 state legislative sessions and seem to be on the increase according to a new report issued by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF).

The report, titled *Beyond the Beltway: State of the States 1995* was issued in Washington, D.C. on July 12.

The report indicates that though the attacks are growing, the LesBiGay advocacy organizations are adapting to the changing political climate and have successfully defeated many of the anti-Gay measures, while pursuing limited advances toward non-discrimination.

According to the report, Gay-related legislation moved forward in 33 states, with 30 states being the sites of anti-Gay measures or significant anti-Gay attacks on related measures, while 18 states advanced non-discrimination measures that include sexual orientation in some way.

The report notes that many of the anti-Gay measures advanced this year focused on the areas of family and education—curtailing rights to adoption and foster care and mandating only negative references to Gay-related issues and individuals through the educational system.

"The Radical Right is successfully exploiting emotional flashpoints around children in the context of family and education," said Robert Bray, NGLTF Field Organizer. "These are areas where myths and misinformation about child abuse, parenting abilities and the existence of diverse family structures ignite fears and inspire extremist legislation. In the name of the 'family values,' the Radical Right frequently attacks the ability of Gay people to care for their own families and children."

1995 also has seen a number of measures

Congress Delivers Good and Bad News for the AIDS Community Nationwide

CARE Act Begins to Move and Appropriations Decisions are Split on Critical AIDS Funding



Badger Awards— Several people were honored at the UW-Madison Gay/Lesbian/Bi-sexual Alumni Brunch and Celebration in Madison. They are (l-r): Distinguished Alumna Award, Carrie Barrett; featured speaker and recent graduate, Jonathan Schaefer; Speaker and doctoral candidate, Michael Besant; and Distinguished Alumna Award winner, Rick Villaseñor.

New Wisconsin Budget Shows Lawmakers Prefer Property Cuts to Lives of Kids

Madison— Public schools will be stripped of \$1 million for sex education in the pending Wisconsin state budget, jeopardizing lessons on teen pregnancy and how the deadly AIDS virus is spread.

Critics said the cuts were part of the GOP majority's conservative agenda. While some Republicans agreed, they also touted the \$1.2 billion in property tax relief they achieved

through such cuts. "It's very clear there are right-wing forces packaging the 'we have to save money theme' with their own agendas," said Linda Willsey, state legislative director for Planned Parenthood.

Republicans said they mainly wanted to save money and eliminate a state mandate on districts. Though the state does not require sex education in schools, districts that offer such programs must include several elements.

When told critics contended the cut was made, in part, because of conservative opposition to sex education in schools, Assembly Speaker David Prosser, (R-Appleton), said there was an "element of truth to that."

"My recollection is there was a relatively brief discussion of this and most people in the (GOP) caucus were receptive to this," Prosser said.

Rep. Scott Walker, (R-Wauwatosa), the sponsor of the proposal, said it had "multiple appeal."

"I won't shy away from the fact that it had appeal to myself and other conservative members who don't believe we should fund this, but the broad appeal was financial," Walker said.

Republicans control the Assembly and the Senate, which sent the budget to Republican Gov. Tommy G. Thompson late last month. He was expected to sign it by early August.

Cut from the budget bill was \$1 million in training and assistance for school districts to provide lessons on such topics as AIDS, sexuality, reproduction, contraception, parenting skills and sexual abstinence.

The governor gave the Legislature a budget in February that cut \$400,000 in grants and Assembly Republicans meeting in closed caucus cut another \$614,400 in training money.

State law does not require school districts to offer human growth and development classes. But districts are required to have citizen advisory committees that formulate sex education curriculums for school boards, which decide whether to use them.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) said 89 percent of 403 school districts responding to their survey in 1993 had human growth and development courses.

"We're just plain foolish if we don't encourage and provide education about this," said Rep. Barbara Notestein, (D-Milwaukee.)

Milwaukee— The verdict is coming in on the long awaited decisions by the new Republican Congress on AIDS funding and the news is both good and bad for AIDS advocates who are vigorously lobbying the Congress.

Last week, appropriators from the House of Representatives made initial decisions to continue national AIDS prevention funding at current levels and to continue the crucial funding of the Ryan White Care Act with an additional \$11 million for new Title I cities.

In light of conservative Republican control of the House led by Speaker Newt Gingrich, AIDS advocates throughout the country were relieved that amidst major budget cutting for social services that AIDS prevention and care services were supported by the Republican appropriators.

"It's symbolic of a real bipartisan support for federal AIDS funding," Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW). "While the AIDS epidemic rages on with greater demands health care and support services, we are obviously pleased that in this first step of the appropriations process that critical AIDS programs have been spared from budget cuts."

Nelson reported that while federal research funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was increased by 5%, that the House Appropriations Subcommittee eliminated the

"This means that not one institute at NIH would be required to spend anything on AIDS research," Nelson explained. "We will be working hard to restore the Office of AIDS Research and dedicated AIDS funding streams at NIH."

AIDS Housing Cut

Nelson reported that other bad news included the consolidation of the popular Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS (HOPWA) program into one housing account for AIDS, the disabled, and the elderly.

"AIDS housing got blended in with other housing programs and the appropriation was dramatically reduced by 45%," said Nelson.

"It pits the AIDS community against other populations in dire need of housing and seriously cuts the funding which really jeopardizes our hope for expanding AIDS housing programs in Wisconsin," Nelson said.

Nelson said that major mobilization will occur to restore HOPWA and its highly successful programs of housing and rent assistance for people with AIDS.

Care Act Scheduled for Vote

Following Senator Jesse Helms' (R-NC) blistering attack on federal AIDS funding, the Ryan White Care Act received a good boost of political support by the addition of two key Republican Senators as co-sponsors of the Senate Care Act Re-authorization Bill.

Senator Alphonse D'Amato (R-NY) and Senator Arlin Specter (R-PA) agreed to co-sponsor the Bill, bringing the total of sponsors to 63.

With this additional support, Majority Leader Robert Dole announced that he would bring the Bill to the floor of the Senate on Monday, July 24, 1995 for a vote.

Dole's action had been urged by AIDS advocates for weeks and essentially pulled rank on Helms.

"We're very pleased that Senator Dole is moving the Care Act to a vote in the Senate," said Nelson. "We know that not only do we have the votes for passage, that we have the votes to cut off a filibuster by Senator Helms thanks to bipartisan support and Senator Dole's leadership."

Nelson expressed concern, however, for negative amendments such as mandatory HIV testing that may be offered during floor debate next week. Senator Helms has indicated an intent to offer a string of amendments on what he terms as the "social and lifestyle issues" about AIDS.

Nelson and his colleagues within the National AIDS Action Council are working with

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