

# News Digest

By the Associated Press

## AIDS — a dark future

### Agency projects 54,000 deaths in 1991

WASHINGTON — More people will die annually of AIDS five years from now than were killed in traffic accidents last year, the Public Health Service predicted Thursday in calling for a national commission to guide America's response to the deadly illness.

The agency projected that 54,000 victims will die as a result of AIDS during 1991, most of them people who are infected now but do not know it. By comparison, auto accidents killed 45,700 people in 1985, according to the National Safety Council.

The health agency also predicted that 145,000 people will be sick with AIDS in 1991, and that treating them will cost between \$8 billion and \$16 billion during the year.

"The numbers... are staggering," said Dr. Donald Ian Macdonald, who heads the agency. "This is a major problem, probably bigger than the Public Health Service... These numbers make it very clear that our work must be intensified."

Macdonald, acting assistant secretary for health in the Health and Human Services Department, made the comments as he released an update of the agency's master plan for controlling AIDS.

The plan was drafted during a three-

day session in West Virginia last week at which 85 AIDS experts from throughout the nation met to compare notes and draft recommendations.

"Clearly, a national, coordinated response is necessary," Macdonald said. "We are suggesting that a national commission representing public, private and voluntary sectors, as well as all levels of government, be set up to look at anticipated needs and resource availability, and to make recommendations on how all sectors of our society can handle this major crisis."

The agency also said it stands by the overall goals it set last year: to reduce the spread of infection by 1987; to slow the increase in AIDS cases by 1990; and to eliminate the spread of the ailment by the year 2000.

But computer projections prepared by the Center for Disease Control indicate the problem is going to get much worse before it gets better.

● More than 270,000 people will be diagnosed with AIDS by the end of 1991, of whom 179,000 will have died.

● About 74,000 people will be diagnosed during that year. And of the 145,000 people expected to be treated for AIDS in 1991, about 75 percent would be among the estimated 1 million to 1.5 million who carry the virus

now but probably do not know it.

● More than 70 percent of AIDS cases in 1991 will be diagnosed among homosexual or bisexual men, the highest risk group. About 25 percent of the cases will be among drug addicts who use infected needles. Those two figures overlap, the agency noted.

● About 9 percent of the cases will occur among heterosexual men and women, a figure estimated at nearly 7,000 cases and an increase from the current 7 percent level, reflecting a slow but steady spread of the disease outside the homosexual community.

Macdonald said research is proceeding, but "there is no drug currently available for AIDS." And he said a vaccine will not be widely available in this decade.

"In the absence of a vaccine and effective treatment, our most powerful tool for the next few years will continue to be the traditional public health infectious disease control measures," Macdonald said.

That includes encouraging people to get diagnostic blood tests and counseling those infected on how to avoid spreading the disease further.

The CDC has recorded 21,517 cases of AIDS; of whom 11,713 have died. No one has recovered.

## U.S. Commerce officials fired

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration, admitting that some of its security procedures have been lax, on Thursday fired three employees of the Commerce Department following an investigation into improper leaks of sensitive economic data.

The three all worked in the department's Bureau of Economic Affairs, which is the government's main supplier of information tracking the economy.

The dismissals followed an investigation into the premature release last September of the gross national product, the closely watched measure of total economic growth.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige said two of the employees had used the data for personal financial gain while the third individual had passed inside information to another person who had profited from it.

Baldrige said dismissal letters were being sent to the three government workers on Thursday but that they would remain on the payroll for at least 30 days during an appeal process. He refused to reveal their names.

He said no criminal charges would be filed because it was not illegal for government employees to profit from confidential economic data. However, he said the administration would ask Congress to make such action illegal in the future.

Baldrige said two of the fired employees had contacted brokers either directly or indirectly to buy bond futures, which are contracts for purchase of bonds at a future date.

The date that was leaked was the "flash" estimate of GNP growth for the July-September quarter, which came in at an annual rate of 2.8 percent, much lower than economists had been expecting.

The release of this information could be expected to spur a rally on the bond market since traders would believe that slower economic growth would lead to lower interest rates and thus higher bond prices. Someone with advance knowledge of the GNP report could make his purchases before bond prices went higher.

The dismissals marked the first time the administration has fired employees for leaking economic data although the

administration has been pursuing a variety of criminal prosecutions against people accused of selling national security information.

A State Department speechwriter, Spencer C. Warren, was fired last month, and a Defense Department undersecretary, Michael E. Pillsbury, was dismissed in April for leaking sensitive

information to the press.

The investigation involved use of lie detector tests and the tracking of some 13,000 long-distance phone calls made from July through October from the Bureau of Economic Analysis to various financial institutions. Most of these calls, Baldrige said, were carried out as part of the bureau's normal business.

## Baby Jesse's heart improving, doctors say

LOMA LINDA, Calif. — The transplanted heart that gave Baby Jesse a second chance to live was beating normally at 100 to 120 times a minute Thursday, and doctors said his recovery was progressing as expected.

No significant complications had developed more than 36 hours after Jesse underwent transplant surgery, said Gus Cheatham, spokesman for Loma Linda University Medical Center.

"He still requires ventilation support but is making progress in being removed from the ventilator," Cheatham said. "He is in a phase of recovery from an operation of considerable magnitude, but has had no significant complications."

Two other infants who had earlier received heart transplants at Loma Linda were back in the hospital because their bodies were trying to reject their implanted hearts, Cheatham revealed while announcing Jesse's condition.

A girl known only as Baby Rachel was in satisfactory condition, said Cheatham. She and the infant known as Baby James were being given immunosuppressive drugs, he said.

Jesse Dean Sepulveda, whose case set off a furious debate over medical ethics, was born with a fatally defective heart and received the heart of a brain-dead Michigan child Tuesday in a four-hour operation at the hospital, about 65 miles east of Los Angeles.

Chest X-rays taken Wednesday showed that fluid was clearing from Jesse's lungs — a good sign, according to Dr. Bruce Branson, chairman of Loma Linda's surgery department.

"To my amazement, he looked far better than I expected, and probably better than anybody expected," said Jesse Sepulveda, the 26-year-old father.

Sepulveda said he visited the baby Tuesday night after surgery and again briefly Wednesday morning.

"I was telling him how much I loved him when he opened his eyes," he said. "It was a real touching moment."

The baby's mother, Deana Brinkley, 17, was absent Wednesday, but her stepfather, Steven McCarthy, made a brief statement for her, explaining "she is just exhausted." He expressed her gratitude to the hospital and media.

Also pleased with the results of the operation was Deborah Walters, 33, of Wyoming, Mich., the mother of the donor baby, Frank Edward Clemenshaw IV.

"Now he's alive and Jesse's alive," Ms. Walters said. "In my heart, I've got them both."

Despite the optimistic prognosis, doctors said the boy faces a lifelong battle as his own body's immune system is expected to attack the donor heart from time to time.

Initially, Loma Linda rejected Jesse for a possible transplant on grounds that his young, unwed parents might not be able to provide adequate post-surgical care. The decision drew stinging criticism from a clergyman and a right-to-life activist, who said the decision should be based on the baby's need, not the parents' age or marital status.

A few days later, Loma Linda changed its stand after the boy's paternal grandparents assumed guardianship. Chief Surgeon Leonard Bailey, who was in South Korea at that time, denied that the parents' marital status or ages were criteria for the initial refusal.

More ethical questions arose after Jesse's operation, when it was learned that at least one other critically ill infant also desperately needs a heart transplant.

Branson said Loma Linda's doctors were unaware of that newborn in Louisville, Ky., known as Baby Calvin.

Three other newborns also are awaiting heart transplants in Pennsylvania, where St. Christopher's Hospital for Children has begun doing such operations, according to Barbara Schulman, transplant coordinator at the Southern California Regional Organ Procurement Agency.

## In Brief

### Jury awards asbestos victim

WILBER — A Wilber man says he was surprised to be awarded \$2.5 million by a jury that decided his lung cancer was a result of breathing asbestos when he was a shipyard pipefitter during World War II.

The U.S. District Court jury in Wichita, Kan., ordered damages for 68-year-old Don Menne, a retired Honeywell technician.

"Although I thought we'd win, I was surprised at the amount," Menne said Wednesday. "You don't know what it took to walk into that courtroom yesterday."

The jury on Tuesday said damages should be shared by four companies that either had manufactured or supplied the asbestos: Celotex Corp., Eagle-Picher Industries, Fibreboard and Raymark Inc. The jury said two other defendants — the Keene Corp. and Owens-Illinois Corp. were not liable.

Tom Hulse of Topeka, Kan., one of Menne's lawyers, said the \$2.5 million award is believed to be the largest ever in an asbestos case, except for one in Hawaii. The Hawaii case, unlike Menne's, included punitive damages.

Menne's case involved actual damages only, since it was tried under Nebraska law, which does not provide for punitive damages. Hulse said the case was filed in Kansas because its court system expedites such matters.

Menne's left lung, part of his diaphragm and the pericardium, which surrounded his heart, were surgically removed in November 1983. Omaha doctors diagnosed his illness as mesothelioma, a type of cancer that attorney Lynn Lamberty of Crete said is caused only by asbestos.

That became a key issue in the two-week trial, since the defendants tried to convince the jury that Menne's illness came from 50 years of smoking. Physicians called by the plaintiffs testified that this particular type of cancer "always has a latency of 20 to 40 years," Lamberty said.

Lamberty, an attorney for Menne, said testimony also was introduced indicating that the asbestos companies were aware that their product was hazardous even in the 1940s.

Menne, who worked as a pipefitter for six years, had requested \$5 million in damages.

### More women business students

College business schools have changed from male-dominated institutions after a decade of increased enrollment of women in business courses, according to officials at Nebraska's three universities.

In 1975, 824 women were registered in the undergraduate business schools at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska-Omaha and Creighton University.

In 1985, 3,421 women were enrolled at the three business schools. Total enrollment at the three schools went from 4,410 to 7,854 during the same 10-year period.

UNL's percentage of undergraduate women enrolled in the business school was 16 percent in 1975 and 42 percent in 1985. UNO had 21 percent in 1975 and 46 percent last fall. Creighton reported a jump from 20.5 percent in 1975 to 39 percent a year ago.

### Peace March practicum

SEDGWICK, Colo. — Sheila Stratton of Randolph says she has learned something about herself every day while participating in The Great Peace March.

"Your body can adapt, your mind can adapt to just anything that you want it to, that you'll let it," the 21-year-old junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln said.

Several 20-mile-a-day hikes and crossing the Rockies are two recent struggles to which Stratton has had to adapt. But three hours of practicum work through the UNL Sociology Department still is one challenge she must face.

When PRO-Peace went bankrupt, so did Stratton's last three hours of in-field practicum work. UNL rules state a board of directors must be in place and a supervisor must evaluate work done on practicum studies.

With the rebirth of the Great Peace March, a board of directors was in place and there was supervision. But Stratton said she is unsure whether she will finish the work, or go back to school at all.

"The ball is in my court now," she said. "I'm leaving myself open, a lot of doors have been opened to me since I've been here. I would love to spend some time traveling."

### Commissioner's trial date set

WILBER — An Aug. 4 arraignment and trial has been set for a Saline County commissioner accused of misuse of public office.

Joseph W. Kovarik allegedly used county materials and personnel to make signs for his auction business and for his recent primary election campaign. It is also alleged that he sometimes had county employees work on his personal car.

Kovarik was a Democratic candidate for clerk of the district court. He was defeated in last month's primary by incumbent Joyce Wusk.

Hall County Judge Richard Weaver will preside over the trial because Saline County judges Pat McArdle and Ray Cellar disqualified themselves from the case.

Misdemeanor charges were filed after an investigation by the Nebraska State Patrol. Kovarik, a commissioner since 1978, declined comment on the case Wednesday.

### Promoters expanding festival

LINCOLN — Blazing sunsets, aging farmers and cobwebbed memories are the stuff of which the Nebraska Writing and Storytelling Festival is made. Older Nebraskans share their stories, students write their poems and a sampling of the entire Nebraska population puts pen to paper.

"We're expanding our clientele," says Julie Thomson Garay, one coordinator of the annual event, scheduled for Saturday at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

Formerly the festival lured mostly older Nebraskans, Garay explains, but this year it is taking aim at a general Nebraska profile. "Of course, many of the older people will return. They are some of our most loyal followers."

Southeast Community College is taking over the program as a pilot project this year, Garay said.

"We had trouble with funding and we're hoping the community college can coordinate it from now on. We'll just have to see how it goes."

The festival, in its sixth year, features the written word in all its forms — storytelling, oral history, historical writing, writing for children and adolescents, fiction, poetry writing and more.

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