

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Universities' health officials debate AIDS policies

By Lee Mitgang
The Associated Press

Already, says Boston University's medical director, Dr. Julius Taylor, the phone calls from anxious parents have started.

"My son tells me there's a gay person living in his dormitory," the typical call begins. "What are you doing to protect him from AIDS?"

Few college and universities have had more than a handful of AIDS cases. School officials across the country, however, are struggling to educate students, faculty and parents about the risks of the disease and to come up with at least loose guidelines to deal with questions from parents and students.

Should students with AIDS be allowed to live unrestricted in dormitories? Should colleges admit high school seniors with AIDS? Should they be allowed to attend classes, or participate in intramural or varsity sports? Should faculty with the illness be

allowed to teach? What about staff such as food service workers? What steps should colleges and universities take to protect the confidentiality of AIDS victims on campus?

"Most people seem to think that a policy is needed, but they also feel we should try to stick with non-discrimination," said Dr. Kevin Patrick, director of student health services at San Diego State University.

College officials emphasized they hope to avoid the emotional uproar which accompanied the first cases of AIDS in public schools.

Most said their thinking is being guided by the federal Center for Disease Control, which has said that AIDS is not especially contagious, and can only be contracted through sexual contact, contaminated intravenous needles or receiving tainted blood.

"One of our greatest fears is the sense of panic," said Kaye Howe, vice chancellor for academic affairs of the University of Colorado, where one stu-

dent has died of AIDS. "There's nothing we've seen from the CDC that would make us share that panic."

Still, the stakes are enormous.

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"What colleges would like to avoid is a 'reputation issue,'" said Dr. Richard Keeling, director of student health services at the University of Virginia. "If, for example, a school seemed to have an overly liberal policy with AIDS victims, then it might attract certain groups and not others as students."

Campus health officials hope, therefore, that they can present as united a

front as possible on dealing with AIDS.

Keeling is chairman of a newly formed task force of the American College Health Association, or ACEH, which is working on policy guidelines it hopes will be broadly accepted by colleges and universities.

School authorities say they are struggling to strike a balance between the rights and well-being of AIDS victims and the rights of the campus community. Whatever decisions are reached, lawsuits are always a possibility.

Education, rather than policymaking, has been the dominant theme of campus AIDS programs so far.

The University of Pennsylvania has printed and distributed an AIDS information pamphlet, and the University of Michigan is preparing a similar publication. San Diego State has put on theatrical productions with AIDS education as the theme, and plans more this fall. San Francisco State will have a week-long AIDS conference in November that will include a panel of

victims. The University of Maryland has a corps of volunteer student "peer educators" who tell other students the facts about AIDS.

The University of California at Berkeley, where two students and a staff member have died of AIDS, has set up a comprehensive counseling program.

Boston University, with a relatively large homosexual population, has gone further than most in formulating a policy.

Medical director Taylor said an AIDS committee is recommending that students who test positive for the AIDS virus, but who have no symptoms, should be allowed to continue normal campus life.

Those with more advanced cases, including individuals with contagious skin lesions, will be asked to withdraw, he said. Faculty with advanced AIDS would be put on sick leave. If they recover, they can return to classes. If they decline further, they'd be placed on long-term disability.

Opposition leaders at odds over the way to 'dismantle apartheid'

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — White opposition legislators and exiled black guerrilla chiefs said Sunday their meeting had produced agreement on "the urgent need to dismantle apartheid and establish a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa." But they said they disagreed on how to do it.

A joint statement issued by leaders of the opposition Progressive Federal Party and executives of the outlawed African National Congress described a "friendly and cordial atmosphere" in nine hours of talks in Lusaka, Zambia.

The statement reported differences of opinion on the roles of armed struggle and negotiation in bringing about change.

The ANC has said it plans to step up a campaign of violence to undermine white-minority rule. The Progressive Federal Party opposes the use of force. The PFP is seeking to arrange a national convention on South Africa's future, but the statement said the ANC did not see "at the present moment a climate under which the ANC could consider a negotiated resolution of the crisis."

The meeting was the second attempt in a month by whites outside the government to directly

involve the ANC, which says it has the support of most of South Africa's blacks, in talks on the country's prolonged crisis.

In Pretoria, South Africa's capital, national police headquarters said one black man was killed and 12 people were injured in 15 incidents of arson and stone-throwing and a hand grenade throwing Saturday night and early Sunday.

The statement by the legislators and the ANC said both groups favored the release of political prisoners including former ANC leader Nelson Mandela, who is serving a life sentence for plotting sabotage. Both have said he will release the popular black leader only if he renounces violence, something Mandela refuses to do.

"Apartheid lies at the heart of the present crisis," the joint statement said. "Both are deeply concerned to conserve the human and natural resources of our country and to remove one of the most important factors affecting the stability of the whole southern African region."

Both sides said the talks were "very useful and, if necessary, it would happen again." They met briefly Saturday night with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda.

Poll: Most think school prayer OK

NEW YORK — While many Americans have made it clear they favor a return of prayer to the classroom, a surprising number — 25 percent — say they think the separation of religion and government, a pillar of the Constitution, is a bad idea.

That was one of the findings when 1,412 people were surveyed in a Media General-Associated Press poll on school prayer.

The poll found that support for silent prayer in American schools is widespread, with large majorities supporting it in every age, race, economic and political group.

One exception was among Jews, where a majority opposed school prayer. Jewish leaders have expressed concern that the Christian majority in the United States could impose its religious beliefs in the schools.

On Oct. 3, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 124 for a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow silent prayer in public schools. If approved by Congress and ratified by 38 states within seven years, the

proposal would become law and reverse a June ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that barred public schools from holding moments of silence if students were being encouraged to pray.

Seventy-four percent of the respondents in the Media General-AP poll said prayer in schools did not violate the constitutional principle of church-state separation. Twenty percent said it did violate that principle, and the rest were unsure.

When asked, "Do you think the separation of church and state is a good idea, or not," 66 percent said it was a good idea, while 25 percent said it was not. The rest were unsure.

Nearly 30 percent of Protestants said church-state separation was a bad idea. Two in 10 Catholics felt the same way. Virtually all the Jewish respondents favored the constitutional separation of government and religion.

On the question of school prayer, 87 percent of the respondents favored a moment of silence in which stu-

dents could pray if they wanted to, while 10 percent opposed the idea. Sixty-three percent favored a moment of silence in which students were encouraged to pray, while 32 percent opposed the idea.

Thirty-one percent of the respondents in the Media General-AP poll had children in public schools, 6 percent had children in private schools, and 1 percent had children in both. Sixty-two percent did not have school age children.

Respondents in the Media General-Associated Press poll included a random, scientific sampling of 1,412 adults across the country Sept. 1-7.

For a poll based on about 1,400 interviews, the results are subject to an error margin of 3 percentage points either way because of chance variations in the sample. That is, if one could have questioned all Americans with telephones, there is only 1 chance in 20 that the findings would vary from the results of polls such as this one by more than 3 percentage points.

Guns readily accessible, study shows

WASHINGTON — Only about one in five convicted felons surveyed by the government said they obtained their guns through legitimate channels such as retail stores, the Justice Department said Sunday.

A survey of 1,874 imprisoned felons in 11 institutions found that criminals much more frequently steal their guns or get them from relatives or friends, the department's National Institute of

Justice said.

The findings were cited by a spokesman for the National Rifle Association as further evidence against the effectiveness of stringent gun registration and licensing controls.

A spokesman for the National Coalition to Ban Handguns said he had no quarrel with the study's conclusion, but that his organization insists handguns must be outlawed.

"More predatory criminals, acquiring a handgun specifically for use in crime, heavily exploited informal, off-the-record means and sources and rarely went through customary retail channels," said the 49-page, \$397,000 study conducted by James D. Wright and Peter H. Rossi of the University of Massachusetts' Social and Demographic Research Institute.

The authors stated, however, that the prisoners interviewed "intentionally over-represents more serious, long-term offenders and is not typical of all criminals in the country."

A key conclusion found that among the sources of guns obtained by criminals, 44 percent either were purchased or otherwise obtained from relatives and friends, 26 percent from the "black market," 21 percent from retail outlets and 9 percent from a variety of illegitimate means.

Of the 1,874 inmates interviewed, the study said, 1,032 said they at one time or another owned a handgun.

In July, the Senate passed 79-15 a bill that would give the nation its most comprehensive revision of firearms laws since the Gun Control Act of 1968. The new legislation, which is pending before the House Judiciary Committee, would permit interstate sales of handguns.

The National Rifle Association supports the legislation and the National Coalition to Ban Handguns is fighting it.

David Warner of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action said almost everything the study found confirmed "what we've been saying all along."

"The basis for all of our arguments is that the regulations (licensing and registration) could only be imposed on the people who would not obey them," Warner said.

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