

WHO estimates AIDS to be more widespread

WASHINGTON (AP) - Rapid spread of the AIDS virus in developing countries means the disease will be more widespread in the next century than previously thought, the World Health Organization said Tuesday.

The current projection that up to 20 million people will have been infected by 2000 also is expected to be pushed up by a rise in heterosexual transmission of the disease in industrialized countries, said Michael Merson, director of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS.

"It is very unlikely that the global prevalence of HIV infection will stabilize or level off for at least several decades," he said.

WHO estimates that 6 million to 8 million people worldwide have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, that causes AIDS.

WHO considers its forecast that 15 million to 20 million people will be infected by the turn of the century to be a minimum estimate, and new projections won't be ready until late this year or 1991, Merson said.

"The global balance of HIV infection is rapidly tipping toward the developing countries," Merson said in an interview.

"In 1985, somewhere around 50 percent of the world total infections, we estimated, were in developing countries. But now we estimate that by the year 2000, 75 to 80 percent will be in developing countries and by the year 2010 as much as 90 percent," he said.

"In addition, if HIV infections

increase rapidly in Asia and Latin America, as they did in Africa, then the current projections of 15 to 20 million . . . will need to be revised significantly upward," he said.

Merson declined to estimate how high the projection could go.

The virus is spread mainly by sexual contact, needles or syringes shared by drug abusers, infected blood and blood products, and by pregnant women to their babies.

In the United States, most of the people with AIDS have been homosexual men and intravenous drug users.

However, Merson said that in industrialized countries such as the United States, with inner city poverty and high rates of intravenous drug use and sexually transmitted diseases, heterosexual transmission is increasing, he said. Spread of the AIDS virus is more likely when a sexually transmitted disease with open sores is present.

About 60 percent of HIV infections worldwide have resulted from heterosexual intercourse, but by the turn of the century, that proportion is expected to rise as high as 80 percent, Merson said.

KSC change in status begins move forward

KEARNEY (AP) - Kearney State College's change to university status took a step forward Tuesday with informal talks between the State College Board of Trustees and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

Officials toured Kearney's campus. A dinner at the student union followed a social hour at college President William Nester's house.

Discussions included general guidelines for a transition that will make the college part of the state university system by July 1, 1991.

"I look forward to a very harmonious transfer," Regents Chairman Don Blank said. "By July 1, 1991, this will have happened," so it's important to work fast, he said.

Seven of the eight voting members of the regent board attended and five of the seven trustees planned to attend.

The Nebraska Legislature passed a law in 1989 calling for the transition. The transfer's constitutional-

ity was challenged by Attorney General Robert Spire, but the state Supreme Court ruled in May that the Legislature had the right to move Kearney State from the state college system and give it university status.

Trustees Chairman Celann LaGreca of Omaha said she and Martin Massengale, interim president of the University of Nebraska, Nester and Blank discussed the transition at a May 25 meeting and drafted a joint resolution to be considered by both boards this month.

The resolution pledges a spirit of cooperation and outlines a transition oversight committee, LaGreca said.

Blank said he expects formal action on the transition to be taken by both boards when they meet separately.

Trustees will meet Thursday and Friday in Lincoln. Regents are scheduled to meet June 22-23 in Lincoln.

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