

UNL examines urine HIV test

Health Center determines the accuracy of testing antibodies through FDA-approved nonblood method

By STACEY RANGE
Staff Reporter

A new HIV test that uses urine samples instead of blood could ease the nerves of the needle shy and would shield lab workers from exposure to the virus.

But because of concerns about its accuracy, the test won't immediately be available at UNL.

The Sentinel Urine HIV-1 antibody test was approved by the Food and Drug Administration Aug. 6.

Dick Van Maanen, director of marketing, sales and business development for Calypte Biomedical, creator of the test, said a urine-based test eliminates the threat of exposure to infected urine.

Unlike blood, semen, breast milk and vaginal and cervical secretions, urine cannot transmit HIV, Van Maanen said.

Calypte began developing the test six years ago despite the scoffing of many scientists who said it wasn't possible to detect antibodies in urine, he said.

The creators wanted to eliminate barriers of blood testing, he said, in-

cluding the use of needles and the threat of exposure.

Van Maanen said as HIV cases rise, the medical community needed to develop a test that would encourage more people to be tested.

"Many people would rather give a urine sample than a blood sample," he said.

The testing has some opponents though.

Pat Tetreault, sexuality education coordinator of community health for the University Health Center, said the urine test had a downfall despite its benefits.

"It is safer and easier but it is not as accurate as a blood test," she said.

Blood tests — the most widely used procedure in detecting the HIV virus — are 10 times more accurate than the new urine test, Tetreault said.

While one to two of every 100 urine tests may produce a false result, she said, only one to two of every 1,000 blood tests will be wrong. All positive results of both tests are confirmed through a second blood test.

Because of those statistics, the University Health Center will prob-

ably stick with blood testing, which has been used for 10 years.

But urine testing hasn't been ruled out and might be available as soon as the spring semester.

Gaye Homer, lab manager of the University Health Center, said the health center's lab technicians, pathologist, medical director and staff will review all available information and testing on the new HIV test when it becomes available.

"It's only been approved for a few weeks, so it has no track record," she said. "Every test, in my book, needs a good track record."

On campus, the new test has already gained support.

"I think it's a great thing," sophomore Marisa Bandel said. "It's nice to have more options especially for those people who just can't stand the sight of blood."

Junior Julie Greenlee said she thought more students would be tested if the health center offered the urine test alternative.

Senior Chris Kumkey agreed, saying that although he does not fear the sight of blood, the urine test had an advantage.

"It's just easier."

Williams' defenses fail; trial to start next week

By MATTHEW WAITE
Senior Reporter

Tyrone Williams' defensive moves have paid off on the football field, but not in Lancaster County District Court.

Lancaster County District Court Judge Bernard McGinn dismissed two of Williams' defense motions Friday, clearing the way for a trial to start next week.

Williams is charged in a 1994 incident in which the former Husker allegedly fired shots into an occupied car. Williams, now a defensive back with the Green Bay Packers, has repeatedly tried to avoid court through different legal maneuvers.

Williams' defense attorney Sean Brennan filed two motions Aug. 20, one to dismiss the charges filed against Williams and another to restrict evidence in the case involving the car Williams' allegedly shot.

Brennan argued that since the car had been returned to its owner and was no longer available for examination by the defense, the charges should be dropped and evidence from the car should not be allowed in court.

But McGinn disagreed. The judge said the Lincoln Police

Department did not err when it released Brook Bohac's 1988 Cutlass Calais on Feb. 10, 1994.

From Jan. 30, 1994, when the car was seized, to when the car was released, police investigators took measurements and got other evidence from the car.

Brennan's motion to restrict evidence was also hindered by an agreement made by Williams' former attorney, Hal Anderson. Anderson agreed with Deputy Lancaster County Attorney Joe Kelly to the car's release Feb. 8, 1994.

Brennan waited until May 21, 1996, to file a motion to produce the car. That motion was made moot by the court May 28.

McGinn said in his decision that Williams is not entitled to a dismissal of the charges. The judge said he will also not issue an order to restrict the evidence.

"It is common practice in this jurisdiction for evidence to be released to owners by agreement of counsel and without specific authorization by the court," McGinn wrote in his decision.

Also Friday, McGinn allowed the state to call Kevin Porter, a former New York Jet, from Fulton County, Ga. Porter was allegedly in the car with Bohac the night of the shooting.

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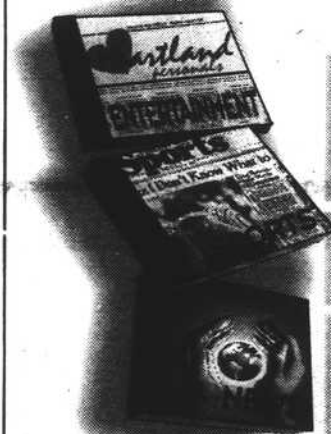
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