

Company to offer AIDS treatment free to children

By JENNIFER BLACKWELL
Staff Writer

The Burroughs Wellcome Co. announced Thursday that it would begin offering the anti-AIDS drug Retrovir (formerly AZT) free to HIV-infected children between the ages of 3 months and 12 years.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officially authorized wider use of the drug in treating children last week. Up until then, Retrovir was only available for adults or for children through testing centers.

Burroughs Wellcome, in collaboration with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, will provide Retrovir Syrup to any child who meets certain criteria and whose physician and parent/guardian agree to enroll the child in the FDA's Treatment IND program. After physicians complete the appropriate forms, they will receive the syrup to give to patients.

The Treatment IND program is designed to expand the access to Retrovir for children, said Sandra Nusinoff-Lehrman, head of antimicrobial ther-

apy at Burroughs Wellcome. "It will help pediatric patients receive therapy with Retrovir until it is fully approved for this use by the FDA."

The Treatment IND program enables drug companies like Burroughs Wellcome to make a potentially life-saving drug available to critically ill patients prior to marketing approval.

Recent studies on the effects of Retrovir convinced the FDA to approve a more widespread use.

Retrovir can halt the progression of the disease, prolong life and improve

overall quality of life for AIDS patients, said Katherine Wilfert, professor of pediatrics and head of the Pediatric AIDS Center at Duke University.

A study recently conducted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) indicates that Retrovir may prolong by up to one-half the life of adults who are infected with the virus but who have not shown symptoms, according to Leslie Sink, a press officer for the NIH.

"At this point, the medical community thinks (Retrovir) will be beneficial to children," said Jill Duval, executive

director of the AIDS Service Project in Durham. Offering the drugs for free is "certainly a positive move," she said.

The Center for Disease Control in Atlanta reported that out of a total of 109,167 reported cases of AIDS as of September 1989, 1,859 of those were children, people under 13 years of age at the time of diagnosis. About 80 percent of the children were infected with AIDS through their mothers, either while in the womb or in the birth process.

Most of the reported cases are among

children under the age of 5. Most of the children infected at birth die by the time they reach 4 1/2 years of age if they are not treated, Wilfert said. The center reported that 1,013 children with reported cases of AIDS have died.

The Division of Health Services in the N.C. Department of Human Resources reported that as of Oct. 23, 1989, 1,060 cases of AIDS have been recorded in the state. Twenty-three of those cases were children, and 10 children have died of the virus since the study began.

Duke Power appeal slows rate decrease

By WENDY BOUNDS
Staff Writer

A utility rate reduction for Duke Power customers will not be quite as substantial due to a recent alteration of an order entered by the N.C. Utilities Commission.

On June 30, a hearing panel for the commission made a recommended order approving a net rate decrease for retail customers of Duke Power in North Carolina. However, the order was reversed last Wednesday following an appeal by Duke Power.

The first order has amounted to a 35-cent monthly rate reduction for the typical residential customer since July

1, 1989. Following the successful appeal by Duke Power, the reduction should now only amount to 24 cents.

The total cost of this new change will be about \$4 million plus interest. But the commission has decided to defer all costs associated with this rate change until May 1990 to avoid further change in Duke's rates unnecessarily at this time, according to the Utilities Commission.

The commission meets annually to review fuel costs by power companies. A standard mean of measurement for these costs has been a 62 percent nuclear capacity factor. After the commission's first order, this factor

was raised to 63 percent. Duke Power's successful appeal has brought the number back to the 62 percent norm.

The lower the norm, the better chance there is that power companies will meet the commission's standards, said Joe Maher, spokesman for Duke Power. The money lost by power companies that do not meet this standard cannot be regained unless special circumstances prevail.

"We cannot collect money we lose by falling below this standard unless we can prove it was because of circumstances beyond our control," Maher said.

Commissioner Ruth Cook dissented from the full commission's second order to lower the nuclear capacity factor back to 62 percent. She said Duke Power over-collected \$55 million from its customers during 1987 and 1988.

These over-collections were returned to the customers, said Ron Gibson, associate general counsel for Duke

Power. "All over-collections made by Duke Power were paid back with interest to the customers."

But Cook argued that "ratepayers should not deliberately be required to overpay Duke in the first place. Ratepayers are not bankers for Duke."

JoAnne Sanford, special attorney representative in the Utilities Department, said no decision has been made whether to file an appeal against the commission's order reversal.

"We are disappointed with the commission's decision to raise the rate, and we will decide sometime this week whether or not an appeal will be filed."

Duke Power refused to comment on what steps the company would take in the event of an appeal.

Whether present rates will increase for Duke Power customers in 1990 depends on the fuel costs for the company between now and then, Maher said.

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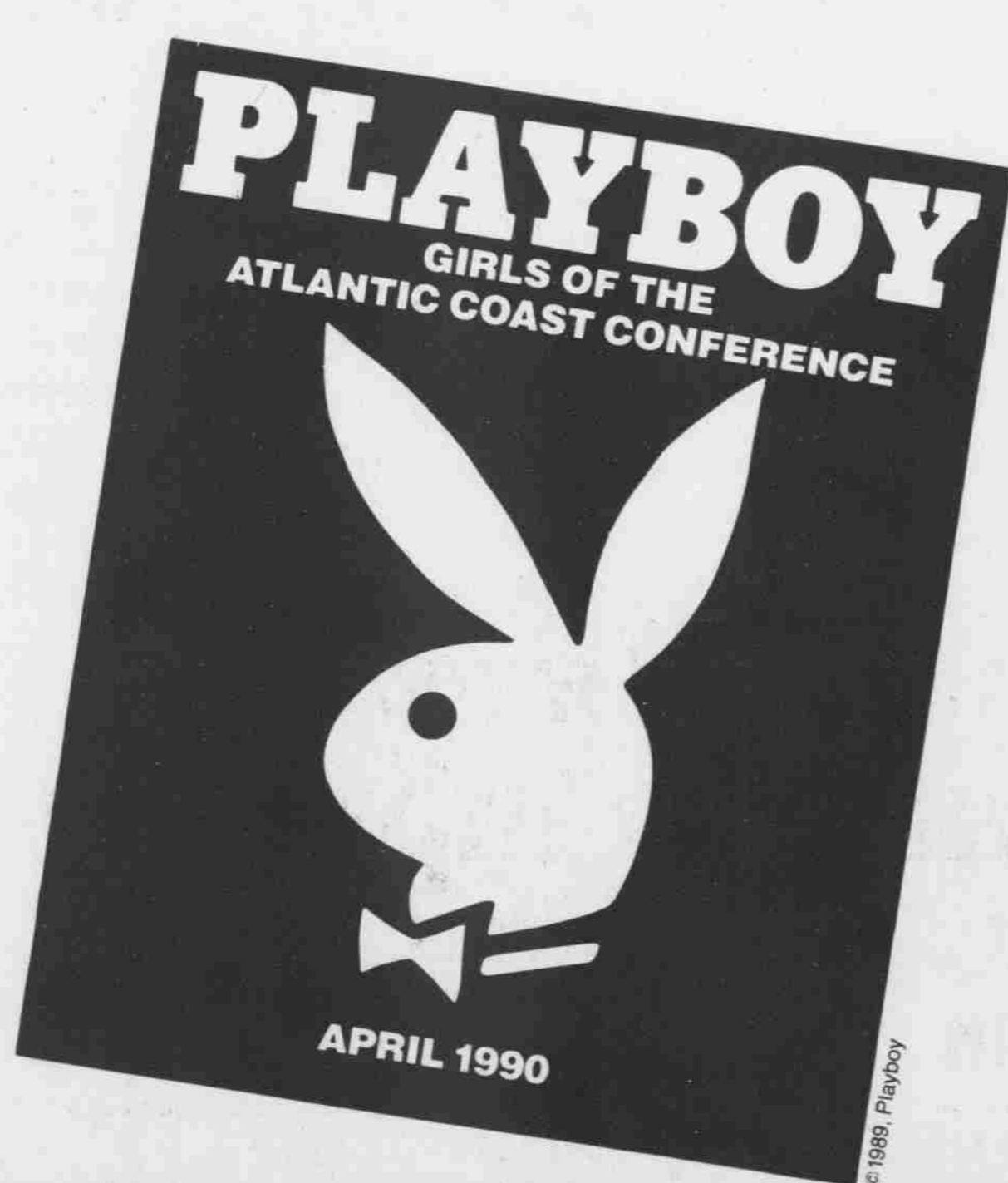
TODAY IS PLAYBOY INTERVIEW DAY AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA!

Playboy's photographer, David Chan, is here and interviewing coeds for a major Spring pictorial on Girls of the Atlantic Coast Conference. To qualify, you must be 18 years of age or older and registered full or part-time at an ACC university. Interested students may call or attend the interview session taking place Monday and Tuesday at the location listed below.

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