

GAY LOBBY

More than 800 lesbians and gay men, and our supporters, met with members of Congress during two days of lobbying activity which preceded the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. On October 8th and 9th, 90 Senators and over 200 Representatives were lobbied by their constituents on the demands of the March.

Organizers have declared the event a huge success. "We achieved just what we set out to accomplish," explained NGLTF Lobbyist Peri Jude. "We articulated the demands of the March to members of Congress, we pushed key pieces of federal legislation, we built support for other bills, and we secured commitments for votes on legislation that is rapidly moving through Congress.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) prepared detailed briefing papers, key legislative summaries and the voting records of all members of Congress on legislative measures of interest to the gay/lesbian community. Mobilization Against AIDS (MAA), a San Francisco-based organization, was actively involved in coordinating appointments by constituents across the country.

Organizers now face the task of sifting through evaluation and follow-up documents obtained from constituents. "We plan to follow-up," said Jude. "We want to build upon this important effort to make sure that promises come true and that the educational process continues."

SAFE SEX CORRECTION

In the last issue of *Lambda*, the article "Safe Sex: A Message From the Heart" contained a few points which needed further explanation or correction. Scott Hustead and Kathy Kerr of the State Division of Health Services were generous enough to provide us with the following information:

We would like to remind those interested in taking the HIV antibody test that it is available through all local health departments in North Carolina". So, students with transportation may go to any local health department for free and anonymous testing.

Here are some additional points or clarifications regarding testing. At the health department, any positive blood specimen is tested two more times. If either of these tests register positive, the blood

specimen undergoes a confirmatory Western Blot test. Only if this final test is positive is the specimen considered positive.

The vast majority of people develop antibodies to HIV within eight to twelve weeks after infection. A few may take as long as eight months to develop antibodies. A recent study indicates there may be rare instances in which someone could take a year or longer to develop antibodies. As you state in your article, a negative test should never be taken as a license to engage in unsafe sexual practices.

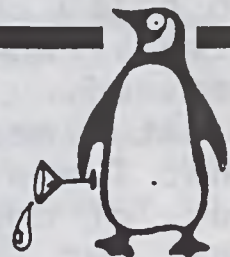
The names of individuals with HIV antibody positive test results are **not** reported to the state. Several states have made HIV infection a reportable condition; but not North Carolina. The names of only those who have received a diagnosis of AIDS are reported to the Division of Health Services.

Testing in and of itself provides no control over the AIDS epidemic. It is appropriate counseling and encouraging individuals to reduce their risks of acquiring or passing on the infection that slows the spread of this disease. Everyone, whether positive or negative, whether they know their antibody status or not, needs to be taking precautions to protect themselves and others.



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