

1B

LIFE



**U.S. syphilis rate increases for second year in a row**

By Daniel Yee  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — The nation's syphilis rate has climbed for the second year in a row, mostly because of an increase in cases among gay and bisexual men, the government said Thursday.

Between 2001 and 2002, the syphilis rate rose 9.1 percent from 2.2 cases per 100,000 people to 2.4 cases, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The rate had dropped every year between 1990 and 2000 before reversing course.

The actual increase in cases was small — 759 more people, for a total of 6,862 new cases — but the rise among gay and bisexual men has caused concern that the public health safeguards and safe-sex practices adopted over the last two decades during the AIDS epidemic continue to crumble.

"The vast majority of the United States is not seeing any syphilis at all," said Dr. John Douglas, director of the CDC's division of sexually transmitted diseases. "We're seeing syphilis rise primarily in groups of gay and bisexual men."

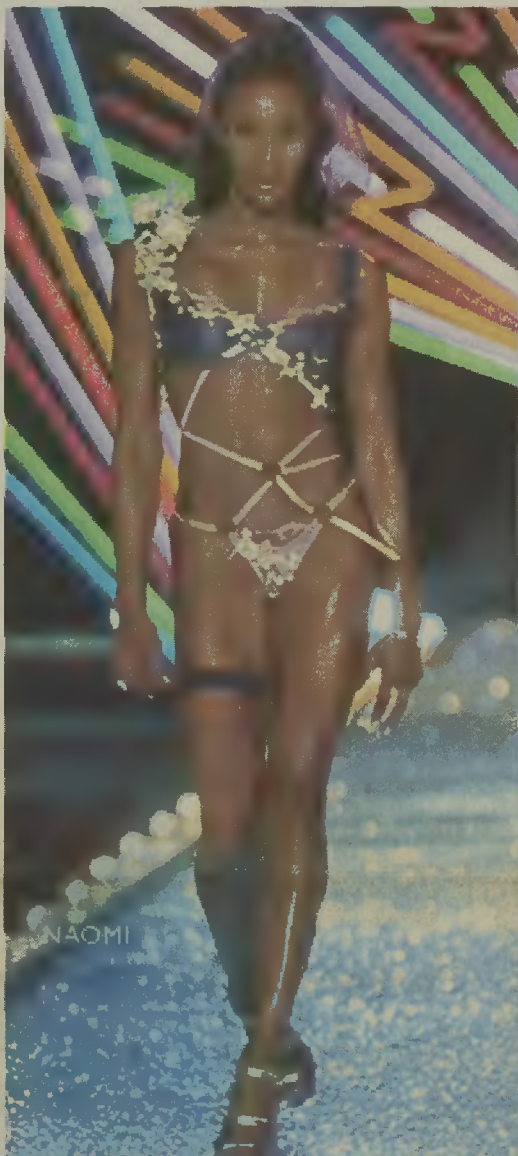
Syphilis cases in the West soared 64.3 percent (1.4 cases per 100,000 to 2.3) between 2001 and 2002 and climbed 54.5 percent in the Northeast (1.1 cases per 100,000 to 1.7 per 100,000), a rise caused in part by outbreaks in these regions' major cities — San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York and Miami.

But the CDC also reported that prevention efforts appeared to be working in the South, which for the first time since 1984, no longer accounts for half of the country's syphilis cases. Also, women and non-Hispanic blacks saw a decline for the 12th consecutive year.

In the past two years, the government has repeatedly warned that gays and bisexuals may be letting down their guard against sexually transmitted diseases. About 40 percent of the new cases are from these groups, the CDC said.

*On the Net:*  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# Victoria's not so Secret



NAOMI



TYRA

PHOTOS: VICTORIA'S SECRET

Tyra Banks and Naomi Campbell modeled Victoria's Secret's latest lingerie fashions.

## Nothing sexy about TV lingerie festival

By Robin Givhan  
THE WASHINGTON POST

NEW YORK — About two-thirds of the way through the Victoria's Secret fashion show — and here one uses the term "fashion" in the broadest sense to mean any scrap of fabric that might hang from the body — a model struts onto the silver-dusted catwalk wearing a pale ivory embroidered lace slip that could well be described as pretty. Although this annual runway ritual, known for its lavish serving of cleavage and bared but-

tocks, has never catered to fashion's most discerning patrons, it nonetheless is startling to realize that only one of 61 ensembles is in any way attractive. Much of it is utterly ghastly.

The Victoria's Secret show was taped in two parts on Thursday at the New York State Armory and was broadcast on CBS last week. The show, which was interspersed with performances by Sting, Mary J. Blige and Eve, attracted more than 10 million viewers. Probably as many of

them recoiled as cheered at the opening sight of a winged model dive-bombing the stage in a pair of pale pink thigh-high boots.

The flying Pepto-Bismol dominatrix was followed by a performance from Sting, who did not catapult in from the rafters but simply strolled in from backstage. He appeared to be wearing long black ecclesiastical vestments accented by a white collar and matching cuffs. The singer's clerical-looking clothes suggest-

See NOTHING/2B

## U.S., United settle on bias suit

By Leslie Miller  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The government announced Wednesday it reached a settlement with United Airlines over complaints the airline discriminated against passengers who were perceived to be of Arab, Middle Eastern or Southeast Asian descent after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The airline, which is under bankruptcy protection, agreed to spend about \$1.5 million over three years for civil rights training to employees who have contact with the public.

United spokesman Jason Schechter said the Elk Grove Village, Ill.-based airline didn't break any anti-discrimination laws.

"We affirmatively deny that any passenger was ever removed from a flight or denied boarding because of ethnic background or national origin after Sept. 11," Schechter said.

The government said in a statement its investigations revealed United had unlawfully removed passengers or denied boarding because of their race, color, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

Kareem Shora, legal adviser to the American-Arab

Anti-Discrimination Committee, applauded the settlement.

He said the anti-discrimination committee compiled at least 82 cases in which airlines removed passengers because of their ethnic origin in the nine months after the terrorist attacks. The complaints declined substantially after the committee brought lawsuits against three airlines, including one against United, he said. A hearing has yet to be scheduled.

Shora said the committee anticipated problems after the attacks and asked the airlines to teach their employees about its passengers' cultures. For example, he said, airline employees need to know that it's considered normal for a Muslim to say a few lines of the Quran before takeoff, and not an indication that he's a terrorist.

The government also brought charges against American Airlines in April for discriminating against Southeast Asian, Muslim or Middle Eastern passengers in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. A hearing on the complaint is pending.

## Abercrombie & Fitch hit with second federal race discrimination lawsuit

By Samantha Critchell  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAMDEN, N.J. — A second lawsuit has been filed against Abercrombie & Fitch, claiming the mall clothes-seller discriminates against minorities who want jobs in its stores.

The latest suit, filed last week in U.S. District Court in Camden, claims the company recruits and hires white college students for its sales positions but tends to hire minorities only for jobs behind the scenes, such as overnight shifts and stockroom work.

The lawsuit filed Wednesday is similar to one filed in June in a federal court in San Francisco and seeks class-action status.

According to the claim filed Wednesday, lead plaintiff Brandy Hawk applied for a job at the Abercrombie & Fitch store in the Cherry Hill Mall in May. She is a college student and a varsity athlete — some of the characteristics the New Albany, Ohio, retailer says it's looking for in a recruiting brochure.

Hawk was initially told by an assistant manager that she would be recommended for the job but was later rejected. In the complaint, Hawk said she was told she did not fit the image the retailer wanted to project.

The company describes itself as providing the clothes for a "casual classic American lifestyle" and its ads often feature scantily clad ath-

letic young people.

The lawsuit is backed by Jesse Jackson's Chicago-based Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

A spokeswoman for Abercrombie, which has about 600 stores and 22,000 employees nationwide, said the company had not been served with the lawsuit and would not make any additional comment.

In the California case, the company has denied the claims and said it wants a diverse work force.

*On the Net:*  
Abercrombie & Fitch:  
<http://www.abercrombie.com>  
Plaintiffs' Web site: <http://www.abercrombielawsuit.com>



StudentFirst Academy, located at 5600 Executive Center Drive Suite 304 held its ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate its first year of educating youth in the Charlotte community.

