

## AIDS Comes To The Carolinas. . .

by Dan Leonard

Yes, gay men in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee are contracting Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Some have already died from AIDS-related opportunistic infections. *Front Page* readers should be aware of the potential enormity of the problem in our area, even though there is no need for hysteria at this time. Gay men might consider, however, that a little caution in their sex lives might be prudent.

The "attack rate" for AIDS is not 100%, but perhaps 25% (not everyone exposed gets the disease). All persons who got whole blood or blood products from a donor who subsequently developed AIDS did not come down with AIDS within two years. However, the "how and why" of some people's resistance is not known at this time.

### AIDS Distribution in Our Area

These are the confirmed cases that have apparently arisen within North Carolina:

- Durham, one, living, Kaposi's sarcoma (KS);
- Chapel Hill, one, dead, pneumocystis pneumonia (PCP), cytomegalovirus (a letter remembering this man, whose surviving family does not want his name mentioned, appears elsewhere in this issue);
- Pittsboro, one, living, Toxoplasma gondii, PCP;
- Kinston, one, living, KS, multiple infections;
- Raleigh: in central prison, two, dead, PCP; in the general community, none yet;
- Charlotte, none yet.

Five other persons have died here of AIDS, but the disease was acquired out of state. Several times, the people listed above are believed to be in a pre-AIDS condition (persistently enlarged lymph nodes or alteration of immune status).

Certainly it is curious that there are no reported cases in Charlotte. Dr. Paul McKinney, of the North Carolina Communicable Disease Control Office in Raleigh, has talked with infectious disease people in Charlotte, and these doctors reported none to him. I have also talked with one family practice physician in Charlotte, who knows of none in her group practice or in their affiliated hospital.

It may well be that when gay men from Charlotte go out of town, they often go to

Atlanta, rather than New York City or Washington. Atlanta has relatively few cases of AIDS. But when gay men in Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh go out of town, they are more likely to go to D.C. or NYC. Since New York City is the epicenter of AIDS in the United States, AIDS may have been brought to the Triangle area by gay men visiting the City and bringing it back to North Carolina. Another possibility is that gays may be bringing it here while visiting family and friends.

Three confirmed cases of AIDS have turned up in South Carolina, according to the Greenville *Piedmont* and other local papers. Eric Brenner, a Department of Health and Environmental Control researcher, told the press the patients are being treated at hospitals in Aiken and Columbia.

Brenner believes that there are probably more AIDS victims in South Carolina than those three reported to the Center for Disease Control. "They're in Atlanta and I'm here in Columbia," he told the press, "and from my position here, I would say there are several other suspect cases. I think there are more than three."

*Our Own*, the Norfolk-based gay newspaper, reports that there are seven confirmed cases of AIDS in Virginia. In a conversation with Larry Zyla of CDC, *Our Own* was told that two of the cases are in Norfolk, one in Arlington, one in Charlottesville, and three in undisclosed locations.

There have been two AIDS cases treated in Virginia's Roanoke Valley, according to the *Blue Ridge Lambda Press*. Both persons became ill out of the state and returned to the area to be near their families. One of the men died in May at Roanoke Memorial Hospital.

Information on the number of cases in Tennessee was not available to *The Front Page* at press time.

Until mid-May, the CDC had been relying on health departments in major U.S. cities to monitor the disease. The center has now requested help from state health departments throughout the country, including the *Front Page* coverage area.

### Who's at Risk?

An article in the May 2, 1983, issue of *Medical News* presents some information that the passive partners in anal intercourse who have a number of different partners are at greatest risk for AIDS. Those men who

swallow the semen of a number of different men are at a somewhat less risk.

Deep kissing and contaminated semen on an open cut anywhere on the body are not yet ruled out as possible routes of infection.

AIDS appears to be caused by a virus that is in all body fluids, especially semen. Semen retention (either orally or anally) is considered risky. Whenever one is having sex with a man whose health and social histories are unknown, one should spit out the semen or have the partner (fucker) wear a good quality rubber.

Anyone who is exposed to the semen of ten or more different partners per month is certainly at moderate to high risk. Those with

fewer partners are at a lesser risk.

All sexually active gay men are presumed to be at some risk, unless they have been monogamous with a monogamous partner or celibate for two or more years.

### Partners of Persons Now Known To Have AIDS

What should people do who are or have been partners of persons now known to have AIDS?

Men whose lovers have AIDS have been told to stop having sex with the affected lover or anyone else. These men are being closely

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## Charlotte Raises AIDS Money

Two popular Charlotte clubs have joined the struggle against AIDS by holding fundraisers. On June 1, the Scorpio held the city's first AIDS event. The Odyssey will hold a second benefit on Tuesday evening, July 12.

At Scorpio, the show was donated by female impersonators from Scorpio, Odyssey and Oleens. Don King, who helped coordinate the event, spoke to everyone about AIDS. He explained the symptoms, what to avoid and where to go for help.

Marion Tyson, who with her husband Okey owns the Scorpio, said that local businesses—gay and straight—donated over \$1,200 in door prizes which were given away. "Our goal was to raise \$2,500," Marion told *The Front Page*, "and we did it! We raised a total of \$2,567!" A check for this amount will be sent to the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City.

"I'm very proud of the turnout," Marion added, "and even more pleased that everyone supported the benefit."

The upcoming AIDS fundraiser at the Odyssey on July 12 should be equally exciting. Admission will be \$3.00 for all members and the money from the door will be donated to AIDS research.

Odyssey plans to fly in a surprise national recording artist to perform that evening.

On that same night, as part of the festivities, Charlotte will vote for "The Best Bartender," which will include all full and part-time bartenders employed by Charlotte's gay bars including the new Brass Rail, Odyssey, Oleens, Scorpio and Tags.

The winner, to be announced that evening, will receive a trophy and a round trip air ticket

to New York City plus \$100 cash.

When asked by the *Charlotte News*, Don King acknowledged that the money raised in these events is "a drop in the bucket," compared to the huge sums that will be needed to find the cause and cure of AIDS. He also made it clear, however, that "the gay community is not going to sit still and wait for somebody else to help it."

"Every gay periodical I've picked up in the last six months has had something on AIDS. Every gay editorial writer is calling for government action. The gay community feels that the government has put little money into researching the disease because it is viewed as a gay problem."

The *Charlotte News* editorialized on the subject on May 30: "...the disease known as AIDS poses a national threat that must be met with national action. Identified only four years ago, the disease is a killer that could become epidemic."

"Last week Dr. Edward Brandt, assistant secretary for health and the nation's top health officer, tried to allay fears that the Reagan administration's \$14 million program this year will be too little, too late. He said he would have blood transfusions himself if it were necessary, and Charlotte Red Cross officials publicly doubt the connection between transfusion and AIDS."

"All of that is no comfort to the 1,450 victims of this strange disease, and no help to the disease's 558 fatalities. The efforts of medical researchers that began several years ago need to be expanded, and pursued with urgency."

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