

New AIDS treatment now available

NICKI WEISENSEE
Staff Writer

The only drug able to treat people suffering from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is now available nationwide, said a Burroughs-Wellcome spokesperson early this week.

Burroughs-Wellcome developed and is charged with distributing the drug called zidovudine, which is sold under the brand name Retrovir.

"We want to emphasize that AZT is a treatment for AIDS, not a cure," said Kathy Bartlett, a media consultant for Burroughs-Wellcome. "It has shown the ability to prolong life in some AIDS patients."

AZT works on AIDS patients by preventing the virus from reproducing itself, she said.

The drug is for AIDS patients, advanced AIDS-related complex patients, and people who've had

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pneumocystis carinii pneumonia or who have a severely depressed immunity system, Bartlett said.

Burroughs-Wellcome is also working on other anti-viral drugs to combat AIDS, Bartlett said.

Burroughs-Wellcome began its research program on AIDS in June, 1984.

One study the company did to determine the effectiveness of AZT involved 281 AIDS patients, Bartlett said. Half received AZT and half received a placebo, or sugar pill. None knew which they received. Sixteen patients who received the placebo died, while only one who received AZT died.

The drug comes in caplet form and

two must be taken every four hours around the clock, she said.

There were 31,834 cases of AIDS reported nationally as of March 2. Of those, 17,851 have died.

Dr. Michael Cairns, a doctor at Duke University Medical Center and an AZT investigator, said he will administer the drug to an AIDS patient once there is one eligible.

"There are some patients I would not put on AZT because of the potential side effects," Cairns said. "(The drug can cause) bone-marrow suppression, which can cause a significant drop in the red and white blood cell counts. The red blood cell counts can be corrected by blood transfusions, but the white blood cell count can't and could therefore expose the patients to other diseases."

Patients who already have low white blood cell counts or who are

on medication which drops the white blood cell count would not be eligible for the drug either, Cairns said.

"AZT is a good first step, but it's by no means the last step," Cairns said. "It's good for the vast majority of patients, but it can hurt some. However, the cost will also prohibit its use."

The cost has been estimated to be between \$7,000 and \$10,000 a year.

AIDS patients who participate in studies on AZT at Duke can receive the medication free, Cairns said.

Medicaid will now pay for AZT for eligible people, said Benny Ridout, a pharmacist consultant for Medicaid.

The Department of Social Services in each county determines the eligibility of an AIDS patient, then refers the names to the state, Ridout said.

Couple surrenders to police after holding school hostage

From Associated Press reports

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador

A heavily armed couple claiming to be leftist guerrillas took over a school Wednesday with about 1000 students and teachers inside, but then gradually freed everyone and gave themselves up.

The man and woman left the school they had held for more than six hours in a blue mini-bus belonging to the army, but police sources would not say where they were being taken.

Putting brakes on 65 mph bill

RALEIGH — A proposal to allow a 65 miles per hour speed limit on some interstate highways in North Carolina drew bipartisan support Wednesday, but a legislative panel put brakes on the measure to allow more study.

Some committee members also said they wanted to wait until the federal situation became clearer. A highway funding bill passed by Congress would allow a speed limit of 65 mph on rural interstates, but President Reagan was expected to veto the bill Wednesday.

Cobras invade hospital

DHAKA, Bangladesh — At least 50 patients ran screaming from their beds after five cobras

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reared their heads in a packed ward on the third floor of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, officials said.

Hospital employees killed the poisonous snakes after Tuesday's fright, but snake charmers were summoned Wednesday in case more serpents were lurking in the big complex, according to hospital officials.

"We don't know where the snakes came from. It's very unusual," said one doctor.

Senate filibuster continues

WASHINGTON — Senate opponents of contra aid lost another battle Wednesday but said they would fight on to break a filibuster and compel President Reagan to account for millions of dollars in previous assistance they say has disappeared.

The vote on ending the filibuster was an even 50-50, 10 votes short of the 60 required.

The filibuster is preventing action on legislation to freeze contra spending for six months and to order a full accounting of how previous aid was spent.

Deadline for leaving compact proposed

From Associated Press reports

CHARLOTTE — A committee of the Southeast Compact Commission recommended Wednesday that member states be given five years to withdraw from the compact after the next host state opens a facility for storing low-level radioactive waste in 1992.

The recommendation by the ad hoc committee on sanctions comes in the wake of a threat by North Carolina to withdraw from the eight-state compact.

After a two-hour meeting in Charlotte, the committee approved a motion by North Carolina commissioner George Miller that would give each of the states five years to quit after 1992.

After that, no state in the compact would be allowed to withdraw without the consent of Congress, according to the motion.

The motion also said each host state would be required to keep the



Gov. Jim Martin

states. The other members of the compact are South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee.

In an interview after the meeting, Miller said he hoped the motion would appease elected officials in North Carolina who were pushing for the state to withdraw from the compact.

"As a consensus, it certainly would address the concerns that have been raised by those who feared that other states would use a facility and then withdraw," he said. "If North Carolina accepts the obligation for 20 years, the other states would do likewise. With that assurance, it certainly satisfies the concerns that have been raised."

North Carolina has been chosen by the other members to open a facility in 1992. During the meeting, Miller expressed the concerns of Gov. Jim Martin and some state lawmakers that other states might withdraw from the compact when their turn came up to store the waste.

"This is a strong message of the good faith of all (eight) states working together," he said about Wednesday's motion.

Earlier in the meeting, attorney Eugene Gressman told the committee that there was nothing the commission could do to prevent North Carolina from withdrawing.

"The commission doesn't have the power to alter the right to withdraw," he said. "Such a major change would have to be approved by Congress and the member states."

Gressman, who helped prepare a 29-page legal analysis of the issue, also said that there was nothing in the law to protect states who go it alone from being forced to accept waste from other states.

'Students with Hart' get suggestions on organizing support for '88 campaign

By MEG CRADDOCK
Staff Writer

The key to being a front-runner in the 1988 Democratic primary is early organization, said John MacArthur, state chairman of former Sen. Gary Hart's 1984 campaign.

MacArthur spoke Wednesday night to Students with Hart, a student organization supporting the former Democratic senator from Colorado. Students with Hart wants to begin organizing now so they will have a strong base of support next fall, said Erika Birg, co-chairman of the group.

Hart will probably visit eastern North Carolina sometime in the

latter part of April, MacArthur said. Visits to other N.C. regions are also planned, he said.

Because Hart does not always take the party line on issues, he is not the candidate of all party insiders, so grass roots support is very important, MacArthur said.

"The strength of the campaign is individual meetings like this," MacArthur said. "There's a lot of room for people to take a major role in the campaign."

The early decision to run for the Democratic nomination by Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo, will not hurt Hart, Birg said.

"I don't think announcing early has an edge," she said. "Early

support has an edge."

Hart, Gephardt and Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, another Democratic hopeful, all want to rejuvenate the Democratic party, MacArthur said. Because of this, he said the three will be competing for similar votes.

"The candidate who can get the most voters out will win," he said. "The phone banks, direct mail and literature drops are critical for that." Strong leadership will be a significant issue in the Democratic primary, MacArthur said.

"What is going to turn voters is not who is liberal or conservative, but who will be an effective leader," he said.



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facility open for 20 years or until the point when 32 million cubic feet of the low-level radioactive material was stored at the site.

The committee's recommendation was expected to come up before the full 16-member commission Thursday.

The motion also asked that the change to the compact's bylaws would have to be approved by the state legislatures in the eight member

WHY "HELGA" PISCOPO EX-EAST GERMAN SWIMMER DRINKS MILLER LITE



"TO KEEP THE GIRLISH FIGURE"

