

## MARCH OF DIMES-FUNDED RESEARCHERS DEVELOP PRENATAL TEST

WHITE PLAINS, July 1 — Researchers supported by the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation have developed a safe and reliable prenatal test for sickle-cell anemia.

This achievement is reported in the July 1 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* by March of Dimes grantees Dr. Yuet Wal Kan of the University of California, San Francisco, Dr. Stuart H. Orkin of Harvard, and Dr. Haig H. Kazazian of John Hopkins University.

Sickle-cell patients suffer painful and disabling crises when their red blood cells "sickle," or collapse into a crescent shape, blocking the flow of blood in their limbs or organs.

About half of those with the disease die by the age of 35, most of the deaths occurring in childhood. About one in 500 American blacks and one in 1,000 Hispanics of Caribbean ancestry develop the

disease. It is caused by an abnormal gene inherited from both parents.

An earlier test combines two relatively new scientific tools: amniocentesis and gene-splicing methods. Fetal cells are obtained by withdrawing a sample of amniotic fluid from the womb. The cells' genetic material is then removed for analysis. This mixture of many genes is treated with a chemical agent, an enzyme called Mst II, that splits normal red blood cell genes but does not split sickle-cell genes.

If none of the genes are split, the fetus will develop sickle-cell disease after birth. If some of the genes are split, the fetus is a carrier of the sickle-cell gene, which he or she could pass on to the next generation. If all of the genes are split, the fetus will not have the disease or be a carrier.

The first prenatal test for sickle-cell anemia involved drawing a sam-

ple of blood from the fetus, a hazardous procedure that causes miscarriage of about five percent of the fetuses tested. A safer prenatal test developed by Dr. Kan last year, using amniocentesis, requires growing fetal cells in the laboratory to obtain enough genetic material for analysis — a process that takes at least five weeks. The much more sensitive Mst II test can detect the presence of sickle-cell genes in the few cells obtained directly by amniocentesis, and can give results in two weeks.

In three out of four pregnancies in which both parents carry a sickle-cell gene, the test shows that sickle-cell disease will not occur. This reassurance provides more than just peace of mind for prospective parents. Without it, many couples at risk would not undertake or continue pregnancy.

## Barbara Curtis Receives New Appointment

Barbara Curtis, an eight-year employee of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority has been appointed supervisor of the Authority's Room Reservations section. The announcement was made today by Executive Director, Frank Sain.

Curtis, who has worked as a reservations operator since she joined the LVCVA in April, 1974, replaces Odessa Scott who is retiring after ten years on the job.

Curtis assumes her supervisory duties on July 1; she will be in charge of eight reservation operators.

The Authority's Room Reservation section averages 400 calls daily, three-fourths pertain to room reservations, one-fourth, information. Both travel agents and convention planners use the Authority's "800" reservation services to book hotel and motel rooms for their clients and convention delegates.

Curtis has a B.S. Degree in English. She is married to Dan Cur-

tis, and has one child, daughter, Brooke age 21 months.



Barbara Curtis

## \$550,000 LICENSE PLATE CONTEST OFFERED

An expert in his field, Plaza Executive Don Dobson has arranged another "first-class" promotion with a \$550,000 LICENSE PLATE CONTEST that will begin on July 13 and run through Sept. 13. Daily drawings — one in the afternoon at 2:30 p.m. and one evening drawing at 8:30 p.m. will commence on Aug. 10. Pleasure cars,

trucks, camper plates, personalized plates, handicapped, disabled veteran, radio ham, motorcycle and old-timer plates are eligible. The only non-qualifying plates will be those earmarked "exempt" and auto registrations involving young people under 21 years of age. "Get your share of money by registering your vehicle license

plate number at the contest desk next to the sports betting area," advises Mr. Dobson.

All plate numbers will be live numbers. Lesser daily prizes offered after the top prize of \$50,000 range from \$15,000 down to \$150. For more information, contact Don Dobson at the Union Plaza Hotel at 386-2110.

## CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING TO HELP SEVERELY DISABLED

Delbert Frost, Rehabilitation Division Administrator, announced the awarding of contracts to the Southern Nevada Center for Independent Living, Las Vegas, and the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living, Reno.

These Centers will serve severely disabled Nevadans by coordinating with existing services and providing assistance with attendant care, accessible housing, independent living skills, transportation, peer counseling, legal and financial counseling, advocacy, and recreation.

According to Frost, legislation passed in 1978 through Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act allowed the Rehabilitation Division to apply for a grant to support independent living programs. The independent living legislation provides that severely disabled citizens should have the right to make decisions that influence their lifestyles.

With technology, the severely disabled individual can reach a level of independence that may not have been pos-

sible a decade ago. Frost stated that rehabilitation and biomedical engineering have impacted upon what a severely disabled individual can do. According to Frost, over the counter devices like environmental control systems enable a disabled individual to lock doors, turn lights or appliances on and off. Microcomputers, equipped with a voice synthesizer, not only allow severely disabled, non-verbal individuals to speak, but also allow them to gain access to the labor market. Advanced electronics have allowed for sophisticated driving systems to allow even a quadriplegic the independence to drive.

The goal of the CILs, as Centers for Independent Living are commonly called, is to assist severely disabled individuals to some level of independence. The Bureaus of Vocational Rehabilitation and Services to the Blind serve eligible disabled Nevadans if they have an employment goal, but many severely disabled individuals have not reached that stage of independence. These Bureaus will co-

ordinate with the CILs so that as severely disabled individuals become ready for employment, they will be referred to these agencies. Frost states such cooperation will allow more disabled Nevadans to take charge of their lives to get off welfare rolls and become wage-earners and taxpayers.

Each CIL has a Board of Directors composed of a majority of disabled individuals to assure that the needs of the disabled are met. Michael Sells is Chairman of the Southern Nevada CIL. Sells, who is disabled, works for Valley Bank. Edward Buttera, also disabled, is the Executive Director. Paul McComb is Chairman of the Northern Nevada CIL. McComb is a teacher of the deaf for Washoe County and is himself deaf. Carol Hurd is Executive Director. The Rehabilitation Division Project Director Elaine Smith has worked closely with the Boards.

The Las Vegas CIL will open soon at 300 Washington. The Reno CIL will be open at the WARC building on Sutro.

*Our success depends upon how well we satisfy you*

**NELLIS**  
**FUTURE**

(702) 649-4200

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## DEPUTY REGISTRARS NEEDED

If you are interested in becoming a Deputy Registrar to participate in a West Las Vegas and North Las Vegas Registration Drive — Call 646-1080.

If you want to register to vote, please call the above mentioned number.

## Judge White

To the editor:

Recently, Justice of the Peace Earle White came under severe criticism in your newspaper as a result of his bail setting for a suspected murderer. The source of the criticism was an unnamed individual within the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department who, by inference, appeared to echo the sentiments of the majority of Metro. This is not so.

Judge White acted pursuant to all of the information contained in the suspect's record, and only after consultation with the police investigator assigned to the case, the district attorney's office and defense counsel. The bail set in this case was acceptable to all persons involved; thus, I find it difficult to recognize the credibility of the source and why this person should be considered as a spokesman when he was obviously not involved.

This letter is not to be construed as a political endorsement — police officials should not engage in such activity. I simply want the record straight that Judge White acted properly in this matter, and my investigators and I are completely satisfied with that action.

Eric S. Cooper  
Deputy Chief  
Metropolitan Police Dept.