

OCTOBER: A MONTH FOR AWARENESS

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The 1980's is the decade of health consciousness and awareness. From physical fitness to diet to battling illness, Americans are involved with all aspects of health. Not since the rise of interest in psychology in the late 1950s has the public thirsted for knowledge in an area of health. The difference between now and then is a matter of survival.

AIDS is one of the most devastating diseases known to many today. It has touched everyone's life in one way or another. Its ramifications, medically, economically, and socially, cannot be underestimated. The public must be educated, informed, compassionate, and committed to overcome this disease and insure the very survival of future generations.

October has been declared National AIDS Awareness Month. If you don't really know anything about AIDS, now is the time to learn. If you have questions about AIDS, now is the time to ask. If you are informed

about AIDS, now is the time to teach others. NOW is the time to become informed about and committed to stopping the spread of AIDS.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Syndrome is defined in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary as "a group of signs and symptoms that occur together and characterize a particular abnormality." This definition accurately describes AIDS. AIDS is a virus that destroys the body's ability to fight off infections and illness. It is the other illnesses that are fatal, not AIDS itself. The disease is characterized by a variety of symptoms, though it doesn't affect everyone in the same manner. Part of everyone's responsibility is to know the first sign of AIDS, its short- and long-term effects, and most importantly, the way to prevent the spread of AIDS.

Yes, there are preventive measures everyone should practice. First and foremost, avoid promiscuous sex and

illegal drugs. If you are sexually active with more than one partner, or entering into a sexual relationship with a new partner, use a condom. It's as simple as that. One unprotected sexual encounter with an infected person can be all it takes to spread the AIDS virus. If you are a drug user, never share a needle. This statement may sound simplistic, but it needs to be said to educate. You need to know the facts to protect yourself.

It must be stressed that you cannot just look at a person to be able to distinguish whether they are infected with the AIDS virus. That is not possible. You must protect yourself in the ways discussed at all times. However, you need not take unnecessary precautions or go to extremes. It must be stated that you cannot get AIDS from casual contact, such as hugging, shaking

hands, using a toilet seat, swimming in a pool, or just being around an infected person, you cannot get AIDS from insect bites or donating blood. The AIDS virus is spread by having sex with an infected person, sharing needles with an infected person, or being born to an infected mother. Take reasonable precautions and you will not be at risk.

You might ask what are the first signs that indicate someone might be infected with the AIDS virus? This list is partial, but should signal whether someone should be tested. The symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- 1) swollen lymph glands in several places throughout the body that have been present for more than a month;
- 2) purplish or dark red lumps anywhere on the body that have recently appeared or are getting bigger;
- 3) unexplained weight loss of more than 10 pounds in two months;
- 4) unexplained fatigue and loss of appetite lasting more than a month;
- 5) unexplained fevers or drenching night sweats that last for several days to several weeks;
- 6) unexplained diarrhea that lasts for more than two weeks;
- 7) a herpes sore that lasts for more than a month, and

8) a thick, whitish coating inside the mouth, not just the tongue, which lasts for weeks.

If you have any of these symptoms, realize that it indicates that you should be tested for the AIDS virus, not that you are infected. If you feel that you may have been exposed to the AIDS virus, you can be tested at the Clark County Health District, 625 Shadow Lane, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., for \$10. It should be emphasized that you can have the virus without having the disease. The disease might be progressive or it might never develop. This is just one of the variables of AIDS.

The short- and long-term effects of AIDS depends on the individual. A person with AIDS (PWA) can continue to work, go to school, socialize, and just live their life. But it cannot be denied that this disease takes its toll. Loss of energy, battling infections, loss of income, estrangement from family and friends, and just the day-to-day struggle with a fatal disease are just a few of the realities a PWA must cope with. Medication, along with its side-effects, becomes an important part of a PWA's life. "Red tape" and government bureaucracy can add stress in the PWA's life. Most of all, public hysteria against infected persons makes staying alive incredibly hard. This, along with the knowledge that the odds of surviving with AIDS for one

year is 50%, permeates the very being of those with AIDS. Still, there are those who survive over five years, while there are too many who succumb within the first year.

What can you do? First, learn — read this and other articles, watch programming concerning AIDS, and go to lectures. You can even help arrange seminars in your place of employment. After becoming informed, teach others. Start discussions with your family, friends, acquaintances and co-workers about AIDS. You can help to spread the word instead of the virus and combat prejudice against those infected. Third, give of your time. Volunteers are needed in all areas, including office work, hospital visits, general labor, transportation, teaching, speaking, or any other area you could possibly think of. All talents and skills can be used in this battle against AIDS. Your help will find an eventual cure for AIDS, assist those already infected with AIDS, and prevent further spread of this disease.

October is AIDS Awareness Month. Take the time NOW to become aware. The agency in Las Vegas providing AIDS awareness is Aid for AIDS of Nevada. For further information, to find help, or to just talk, either call our office at 369-6162, or our hotline at 369-5367. Ignorance is not bliss, not when it comes to AIDS. Don't die of ignorance.

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU RECRUITING TEMPORARY WORKERS

The U.S. Census Bureau has a number of temporary jobs open during the next few months in Las Vegas to help compile a master address list for use during the 1990 national census.

Temporary census workers usually will work two to eight weeks and will be paid \$5.50 an hour plus auto mileage where appropriate. Applicants for the job must be 18 years old or over, a U.S. citizen, and take a written test.

The work involves driving or walking to prepare a list of addresses of each dwelling unit in designated areas of the county. The collected addresses will be combined with others purchased from commercial vendors to build a nationwide automated address file which will be a key to a complete census.

"This address listing operation is the foundation for a successful 1990 census," said Census Bureau Regional Director Mr. Leo

Schilling. "The resulting automated address file will be the central mechanism to keep track of over 100 million census questionnaires nationwide." Each housing unit in the nation will receive a questionnaire during March 1990. Census Day is April 1, 1990.

The 1988 address collection activity in the county is part of a nationwide Census Bureau program involving 35,000 temporary workers. County residents interested in applying for the temporary census jobs should contact:

U.S. Census Bureau
301 E. Stewart St., Rm. 201
Las Vegas, NV 89101
Attn: Al Gowens
702) 387-6669

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