

Editorial

More than testing needed against AIDS

President Reagan publicly addressed the issue of AIDS for the first time of his presidency on Sunday. His message called for wider and routine testing of the deadly syndrome, and while much of what the President said made sense, certain aspects of his plan need review.

Reagan, following the advice of his cabinet, called for mandatory AIDS testing for federal prisoners and immigrants. This is wholly consistent with current public health policies, and the president should be applauded for this move.

Immigrants receive blood tests for communicable diseases before they are granted permanent residency. Adding AIDS to the current list of diseases that are to be tested for stands as a solid public health practice.

Testing federal prisoners for AIDS comes as another sound policy. The cases of AIDS among federal inmates have mushroomed in the past few years, and identifying prisoners with AIDS should help slow the spread of this disease behind bars.

Although mandatory testing for these two groups remains admirable, routine testing for the general population should be handled with care. The murky term "routine" treads dangerously close to "mandatory," which has prompted protests from public health officials across the country.

Kristine Gebbie, chairperson of the Oregon AIDS Task Force for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers, stated, "I am very concerned that they're using 'routine' to mean 'mandatory', and I really object to the lack of informed consent."

But William Bennett, secretary of education, helped clarify the term "routine" on ABC's television program "Nightline," saying AIDS testing would be offered on a routine basis for marriage license applicants and those seeking treatment at drug abuse and sexually transmitted disease clinics. These people, then, have the option to refuse AIDS testing.

("Routine" crossed the bounds to "mandatory" for Oregon residents on Monday when the Senate passed a resolution requiring marriage license applicants to receive pre-nuptial AIDS tests.

Gebbie's fears were realized with this action, and the Senate's decision comes as unfortunate. AIDS victims, 90 percent who are homosexuals and intravenous drug users, are unlikely to wed. Opponents of mandatory pre-nuptial AIDS testing are correct when they maintain testing couples will net few AIDS carriers and will cost too much money to administer.)

The president took a step in the right direction when he announced increased testing; however, he didn't go far enough. Reagan should have placed more emphasis on AIDS education. Testing certain segments of society does little, if anything, to increase awareness among the general population.

In that regard, detractors of his testing policy are correct. But testing and AIDS education stand completely compatible with each other. What the country needs is a two-pronged approach to the AIDS problem — an approach that not only offers testing for at-risk groups, but also enlightens society as a whole.



Letters

Question it

Why the sudden increase in mass media coverage on evangelistic scandals lately? Never in the past have such issues received this level of coverage.

Sure, there was coverage, but all such issues were of secondary importance. They often got page 17 or "by the way..." but rarely, if ever, front cover or their own program. So the big question one should ask is why the sudden increase?

Ever since Pat Robertson announced his willingness to run for the presidency there has been an increase in the coverage of religious malign. Could it be that some inside source, possibly big business, feels threatened by Robertson's approach?

Who would feel the most pressure by P.R.'s presence in the White House? Who's business or political standing would be threatened by Robertson's ideals?

It is a rather widely known act that the mass media bigwigs are not without their price. Bribing executives or officials is certainly a possibility. And what about the media stockholders in

political standing?

Is this heavy coverage an attempt to cloud the minds of voters? Is this an attempt to make the generalization that all evangelists are crooks and charlatans? Is this an attempt to put a damper on fair judgment when one is in the voting booth by creating memories of numerous evangelistic scandals?

Think about it. News is not always impartial. It often has a greater significance than the obvious. Question it!

I am neither a Christian nor a strong supporter of Pat Robertson but even so I do believe the media should be watched carefully and questioned.

Wayne E. Ewing
Telecommunication and film

Shape up

In your article on Penny Graves (ODE, May 26) you opened and closed your article with two stupid and offensive remarks about her: "You've come a long way, baby," and, "If that's the case, then this baby's still got a way to go."

It's gross enough when Virginia Slims does it. Shape up.

Emily Diamond
Eugene

In the home

There's no way anyone is born to be a homosexual. We may inherit many traits from our ancestors but homosexuality isn't one of them.

Some people might ask: Why do we sometimes see families with several offspring becoming homosexual? Well, a safe guess would be that an environmental factor was involved.

The Bible stresses that children are to be taught God's commandments. But some parents don't provide good role models or teach against sexual experimentation and/or homosexuality.

Obviously, children from this

sort of environment will be more likely to try out non-traditional lifestyles, especially if an older sibling has already become involved with it and exposed the family to this lifestyle.

It should not be assumed that if a particular family has several homosexuals in it that biology is to blame. It may be due to the already mentioned influences.

There are, of course, other factors experts theorize about as to their contributions to homosexual behaviors, but the "biology made me do it" justification isn't accepted by many people.

It should come as no surprise that the incidence of everything from homosexuality to abortion is much higher among people whose families were not very religious when they were growing up.

Children get their intelligence, aptitudes and health from parents, but the direction they take in life depends mostly on the values stressed in the home.

Benjamin Davis
Biology

Poor visibility

I feel that the Oregon Daily Emerald did not do a sufficient job in covering the extension of the library hours (ODE, June 1).

First of all the article was placed on Page 6, which did not give the issue the visibility it needed. It made me upset that community events took priority over this article which affects the whole student body.

Second, the article was vague on when the library hours are extended. It starts June 3 and continues through June 10.

The hours will be extended from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. The article was well written about the process, but it did not get the visibility or the details it needed.

Sylvia Shannon
Coordinator of the extension
of the library hours
Thursday, June 4, 1987

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