

Survey reports discrimination in medicine

A study detailing homophobic discrimination in medical care was released recently by the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights. Of 711 gay and lesbian doctors who responded to the survey, two-thirds knew of patients who had been denied treatment or were given substandard care because of their sexual orientation.

The report has been called "disturbing but accurate," by gay and lesbian physicians. "It's clear that homophobia is as invasive in the medical world as it is everywhere else, if not a good deal worse," said Boston physician David Russell.

"I just had a patient the other day who was told to get out of his doctor's office because he asked for an HIV test," said physician Scott Harris, Russell's medical partner. "It's clear that many gays and lesbians are receiving inferior care. You should be able to talk to your doctor about those things."

The study, inspired by President Clinton's health care reform package, caught the attention of Massachusetts Democrat Gerry Studds. "Never again must any American be denied medical treatment or be forced to accept an inferior standard of care.... Reform without anti-discrimination protections for every American would be a cruel illusion."

Benjamin Schatz, executive director of AAPHR and author of the study, says the association recommends the following: establishing anti-discrimination programs for hospitals and medical associations, providing lesbians and gay men with a choice of managed care programs and of openly queer physicians who are knowledgeable on gay and lesbian health issues, and prohibiting discrimination in health care based on sexual orientation by including protections in the Clinton health care proposal.

Bob Roehr

Gay murders investigated by D.C.-area paper

The *Washington Blade* reports that 25 gay men have been murdered inside their homes in the Washington, D.C., area during the past five years. The murders appear to fit a pattern that area police departments may have failed to recognize, the paper claims.

In each of the cases the victim was killed in his own home, with no signs of forced entry. A majority of the cases show what police call "overkill," where the perpetrator inflicts multiple wounds. The murders were committed by varying methods.

Ten of the murders have occurred in the last ten

months, prompting complaints by activists that police have not properly investigated these cases for links. Fifteen of the cases occurred in D.C., four in northern Virginia, and four in suburban Maryland. Most police investigators have said they were unaware that similar gay-related murders had occurred in neighboring jurisdictions.

In each of the 25 cases, there was no evidence of forced entry, leading investigators to believe that the victims most likely invited their killers inside. In many of the cases, people who knew the victims stated they were known to invite home men whom they met in bars or other meeting places for gay men.

Two of the 25 cases have been completely solved, with defendants having been convicted and imprisoned. In seven of the remaining 23 cases, arrests have been made. However, one suspect has been acquitted, and one has been acquitted on murder charges and is awaiting trial on a manslaughter charge. Five of the suspects are currently awaiting trial.

The investigation by *Blade* reporters has awakened interest at the FBI. Susan McClure, an official with the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime in Quantico, Va., said the FBI has a highly developed system for determining possible links between murders within regions or cities. Information from the FBI center reinforces the possibility of a link in the 25 murders. The FBI has found that serial killers often kill their victims with different weapons, a point that has kept D.C. police from connecting the cases.

As a result of the *Blade* investigation and FBI interest, the commander of the D.C. Police homicide squad has issued a memo making it mandatory for detectives to submit information about gay-related murders to the FBI's crime analysis unit.

Jann Gilbert

Sodomy laws targeted

The human rights group Amnesty International is launching a campaign against U.S. sodomy laws. Organization chapters in five states with sodomy laws that apply only to homosexual activity will be briefed on the campaign focusing on homophobic human rights abuses, reports *The Washington Blade*.

The five states are Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Montana and Tennessee. Texas has a similar law, but a court ruling that the law is unconstitutional is currently in place.

In February, Amnesty International issued a report on human rights violations against sexual minorities called "Breaking the Silence." At the same time, it began a campaign to educate its members about human rights abuses against sexual minorities. The six-month campaign culminated in the International March on the United Nations

to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People, a part of the Stonewall Celebrations in New York this June.

Amnesty recently released its 1994 human rights report for the year 1993. Three countries were mentioned for homophobic abuses: Brazil, Romania, and the former Soviet republic of Belarus. The report did not discuss the status of sodomy laws in a number of other countries, including the U.S., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Macedonia, Moldavia and Serbia, because these countries fall outside the Amnesty mandate. *The Washington Blade* reports.



Amnesty adopts the cases of gay men or lesbians who are jailed under their country's sodomy laws as "prisoners of conscience." In Romania, Amnesty has adopted five gay men who were jailed last year under these laws, and has documented torture and ill-treatment by the police there.

According to the report, in Brazil, an openly bisexual politician, Renildo José dos Santos, was abducted and killed in March 1993 by a group of men believed to be off-duty military police officers.

And in Belarus, Ministry of Justice officials reported that 15 people were sentenced under the country's sodomy laws, although it was not known how many of these were for same-sex relations.

The report also mentioned that Lithuania and Russia repealed their sodomy laws in 1993. In

Russia, "government sources reported that all those convicted solely of such activity would be released."

In Mexico, two gay activists adopted by Amnesty as "prisoners of conscience" were reported released in July of last year. But in Nicaragua, the Supreme Court failed to rule on a challenge to the country's sodomy law. Amnesty has said it will adopt people convicted under that law as prisoners of conscience.

Jann Gilbert

Queers picket talk show host

About 40 gay men and lesbians picketed outside the Catamaran Hotel in Mission Beach, while radio station KSOO hosted a reception inside for advertisers.

The station is home to homophobic talk show host and former San Diego mayor Roger Hedgecock, who led the recent failed efforts of a right wing group to sue its way into the local pride parade.

In a written statement, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, which organized the picket, said: "There is a growing nationwide sentiment that some radio talk show hosts have gone too far with their personal attacks, groundless accusations and irresponsible statements.... We are exposing... Roger Hedgecock for his bigoted hate-mongering and irresponsible broadcast journalism."

Hedgecock is quoted as saying, "My definition of homosexuality is a person who has dropped all moral barriers...to descend to a level of utter depravity, to stick their penis into the back end of the butt end of another male.... If you made the same assertion of your love for a German Shepard, I would still be appalled if you want to stick your penis into his rear end.... And what is the next step? If you're going to go for kids and other guys and dogs, where do we draw the line?"

Hedgecock also reportedly said over the air: "We are looking for 10,000 people to completely dwarf this so-called pride parade. What is there to be proud of, anyway—that they've perpetrated the most devastating plague since the Black Death in the 16th century?"

He also allegedly said, "It's easy to see why gays want so much to be in the military and be the Boy Scout leaders, because that's where the boys are."

KSOO General Manager Susan Hoffman says Hedgecock's statements are "his own opinions and not necessarily the opinions of the radio station. There's a disclaimer at the beginning of the show," she noted.

Rex Wockner

cathartic comics I featuring The Brown Bomber and Diva Touché Flambé by Prof. I.B. Gittendowne

