

NATIONAL news

to stave off the growth of HIV.

One researcher, Dr. Ralph Nachman, suggested that "TSP derivatives could potentially be used vaginally, rectally and orally in condoms, foams, suppositories, mouthwashes and toothpastes" to inhibit transmission of HIV.

While TSP is a very large molecule not easily used directly in patients, the team's research indicates that small pieces of the protein, called peptides, can block binding of HIV to its receptor on immune cells and therefore could be used to prevent sexual transmission of HIV.

THE WRITE STUFF

More than 1,500 attendees are expected at OutWrite '98, the seventh national conference for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans writers, say event organizers.

Independent filmmaker Pratibha Parmar and playwright Craig Lucas head the list of big names scheduled to appear at the conference, to be held Feb. 20-22 in Boston.

Parmar, widely known for her 1993 film *Warrior Marks*, is a London-based writer, filmmaker, critic and co-editor of *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*.

Award-winning playwright Lucas (*Prelude to a Kiss*, *Reckless*, *Blue Window*) is perhaps best known as the screenwriter for *Longtime Companion*.

This year's Audre Lorde Memorial Lecture will be delivered by Jewelle Gomez, author of *The Gilda Stories*, *Forty-Three Septembers* and *Oral Tradition*, and the closing plenary of the conference will feature a performance by Peggy Shaw, a founding member of the performance troupe Split Britches.

The OutWrite conference is sponsored by the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation. For more information, write to BSEF, 29 Stanhope St., Boston, MA 02116, or call (617) 262-6969.

IN THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

The Democratic National Committee's bodies that govern delegate selection for the convention in 2000 voted unanimously to adopt language requiring state parties to include sexual minority representation.

Two DNC subcommittees accepted an amendment stipulating that state parties develop and submit outreach plans for delegate selection that include those "historically underrepresented" in the party because of "race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or disability," and that those groups be given "priority of consideration."

The subcommittees voted in favor of the amendment in mid-January.

"This is another example of the Democratic Party's commitment to equal opportunity and full inclusion of lesbians and gay men in the affairs of the party at the local, state and national level," said Los Angeles County Democratic Party chair Garry Shay, who submitted the amendment to the DNC's Rules and Bylaws Committee.

Shay credited passage of the new language to efforts by DNC members Jeff Soref and Jean O'Leary, California Assemblywoman Carole Migden, and Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund Executive Director Brian Bond.

Of the 4,925 delegates to the party's 1996

convention in Chicago, at least 146 were openly gay or lesbian.

HRC LAMENTS HIGH COURT INACTION

In a Jan. 12 news release, the Human Rights Campaign expressed disappointment over the U.S. Supreme Court's decision not to review the case of a lesbian attorney who claims she was denied employment by the Georgia attorney general's office because of her sexual orientation.

The case, brought by Robin Shahar against former Georgia Attorney General Michael Bowers, says in September 1991 Shahar accepted an offer, pending her graduation from law school, to work as a staff attorney in Bowers' office only to learn months later the offer had been rescinded after Bowers learned of Shahar's participation in a religious commitment ceremony with her partner.

"Robin Shahar's job offer evaporated solely because she is a lesbian—exactly the kind of situation the majority of Americans believe is unfair," said HRC's political director Winnie Stachelberg, who repeated the group's call on Congress to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that would protect citizens from employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

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GMHC CALLS FOR HIV TRACKING

Gay Men's Health Crisis is calling for a new system for tracking HIV infection in New York, PRNewswire reported on Jan. 13.

Until now, GMHC has opposed plans to report HIV infections. But with changes in the epidemic, the agency now believes that the old hospital-based AIDS reporting system is obsolete.

It says a new monitoring system is critical to help prevent new infections, especially among young people, as well as to expand health care for those already infected with HIV.

The numbers of AIDS cases and deaths have been available for years, but the huge number of those infected with HIV—and of new infections each year—remains a mystery.

"Shifts in HIV infections and new early treatment options demand new approaches," says Ronald S. Johnson, GMHC's managing director for public policy, communications and community relations. "Counting only those who are hospitalized reveals yesterday's epidemic, not today's. We are committed to fighting for a new system of tracking HIV infections with strong privacy protections that will help those most at risk: the poor, women, youth—especially gay youth—and young adults."

New York's current monitoring system, designed in 1983, tracks the epidemic by counting people who become hospitalized with, or die from, AIDS-related illnesses.

GMHC is calling for a monitoring system with strong and enforceable privacy protections to prevent discrimination against people with HIV. It also favors the preservation of free, publicly funded anonymous testing, saying the lack of this option leads some people to delay testing, donate blood as a means to be tested anonymously, and give false information at testing sites.

■ Compiled by CHRISTOPHER D. CUTTONE

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Ms. Lavallee extends her best wishes to her former partners, Katherine Tennyson and Kristen Winemiller, in the continued success of their law practice.

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