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**NATIONAL news**

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

On Oct. 28, President Clinton outlined a \$156-million program to boost HIV-related services in African American and Hispanic communities.

"The AIDS crisis in our communities of color is a national one, and that is why we are greatly increasing our national response," Clinton told reporters. "Black or white, gay or straight, rich or poor—you name it, we have to stop it."

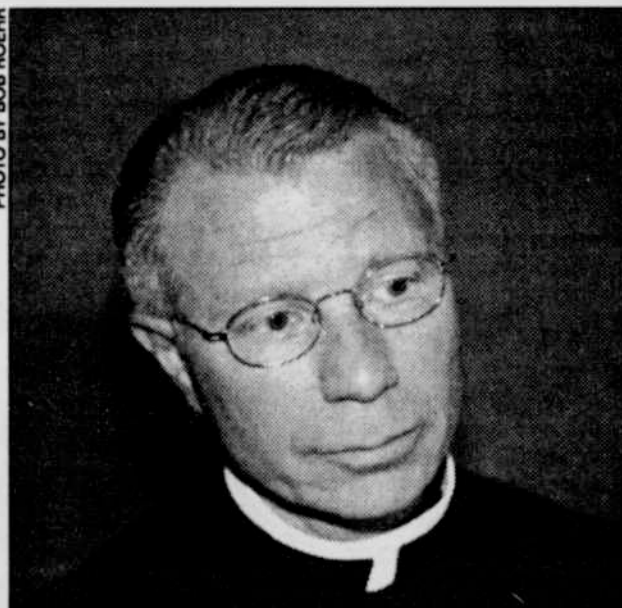
African Americans reportedly account for more than half of new HIV infections. African Americans are eight times more likely than Caucasians to contract the virus, while Hispanics are four times more likely to do so.

Administration officials say this new initiative is designed to reach out to minority communities in a comprehensive way. Federal officials also plan to form teams to help communities set up programs serving African Americans and Hispanics with HIV or at risk of contracting the virus.

**ILLINOIS**

The nation's largest lesbian and gay church is suing a Chicago television station that is carried nationally on cable, saying it reneged on a contract to show an infomercial about the congregation.

PHOTO BY BOB ROEHR



The Rev. Michael Piazza

According to an Oct. 29 Associated Press report, the video from the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas included testimonials from members, scenes of worship at the 3,000-person church and discussions with members' families.

WGN-TV accepted a \$12,000 check for the first broadcast, according to the lawsuit filed in federal court in Chicago. But then the station returned the money because it felt the infomercial was "not appropriate content for [the] station," said Christopher Wolf, a lawyer for the church.

"I think those are code words for homophobia and for anti-gay discrimination," he added.

WGN officials declined to comment.

According to the AP, the Rev. Michael Piazza of the Cathedral of Hope said the video was meant to counterbalance an anti-gay ad campaign launched by conservative Christian groups.

**MARYLAND**

Baltimore Circuit Judge Richard T. Rombro has ruled the state's anti-sodomy law, which prohibits oral sex between people of the same gender, violates the constitutional rights of gay men and lesbians, reports the Oct. 17 issue of *The Baltimore Sun*.

The law did not apply to heterosexual partners. A law making anal sex illegal for everyone was not part of the case and remains on the books.

Although the anti-sodomy law was rarely enforced against adults engaging in private, consensual sex, *The Sun* says it has been used in child custody cases.



NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY...

OCTOBER 11

**MICHIGAN**

The queer student alliance at Michigan State University in East Lansing wanted to do something to honor National Coming Out Day. So on Oct. 8, members of the group painted the rock on Farm Lane.

That night somebody else decided to paint the rock, too. In no time, the rock was covered with gay slurs, including comments like "kill fags," and "kill flames."

University workers quickly painted over the rock, obliterating the slurs, the Oct. 9 *State News* reports.

Peter McPherson, the university's president, also issued an official statement condemning the hateful language and declaring the campus must be a safe place where all can learn and grow with dignity.

**NEW YORK**

Gay and lesbian activists jailed for taking part in an Oct. 19 demonstration say they were denied access to their AIDS medications.

"I am very angry that a peaceful candlelight vigil could end with my life being threatened," said John Irizarry, 27, who spent 19 hours in custody after a march inspired by Matthew Shepard's murder.

An Oct. 21 Associated Press report says at least five of the roughly 100 people arrested were denied access to HIV or AIDS medications, according to the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

Patients like Irizarry should never miss a dose of medication because that can allow the virus to weaken their immune systems, Dr. Paul Curtis Bellman, an HIV specialist, told the wire service.

Robert Gangi, executive director of the Correctional Association of New York, a prison watchdog group, told the AP this is not the first time police have refused requests for medication.

A police spokesman said police do not dispense any kind of medication. Instead, if someone needs to take a prescription, he or she is given the option of being taken to a hospital for evaluation.

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Gay alumni of Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist school located in Greenville, have been put on notice: Stay away from campus or be arrested—so says an Oct. 23 Associated Press story.

The school has threatened to arrest all gay graduates who step foot on campus. The only exception is visitors to the art museum. (The exception was made to avoid jeopardizing the museum's tax-exempt status.)

Wayne Mouritzen, a 60-year-old retired minister and Bob Jones alumnus, learned of the ban when he received a letter from the dean of students banning him from campus because university officials had discovered he is gay. Not surprisingly, the letter came as a shock to Mouritzen, who had come to terms with being gay just six months earlier.

"They do have a beautiful art gallery, but who wants to go on campus and get arrested?" he said. "It's truly not public if it discriminates against gays."

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