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**NORTHWEST news**

**WORLD AIDS DAY:  
 A LOOK BACK**

The 13th annual World AIDS Day is being observed Dec. 1 to increase awareness of the magnitude of the epidemic globally and in the United States.

This year's theme is "AIDS: All Men—Make a Difference!" Because men represent the majority of people living with HIV/AIDS, they are being urged to increase their awareness of the risk for themselves, their partners and their children and to use their influence in their families, among their friends and in their communities to help stem the tide of the disease.

The global epidemic has become so alarming that the United States has declared AIDS a national security threat. About 850,000 people in this country now are infected with HIV.

Despite the fact that new AIDS drugs are prolonging years of productive life for many with HIV, the rate of new infections remains high in the United States, with 40,000 new infections reported in 1999. This is a brief history of the epidemic:

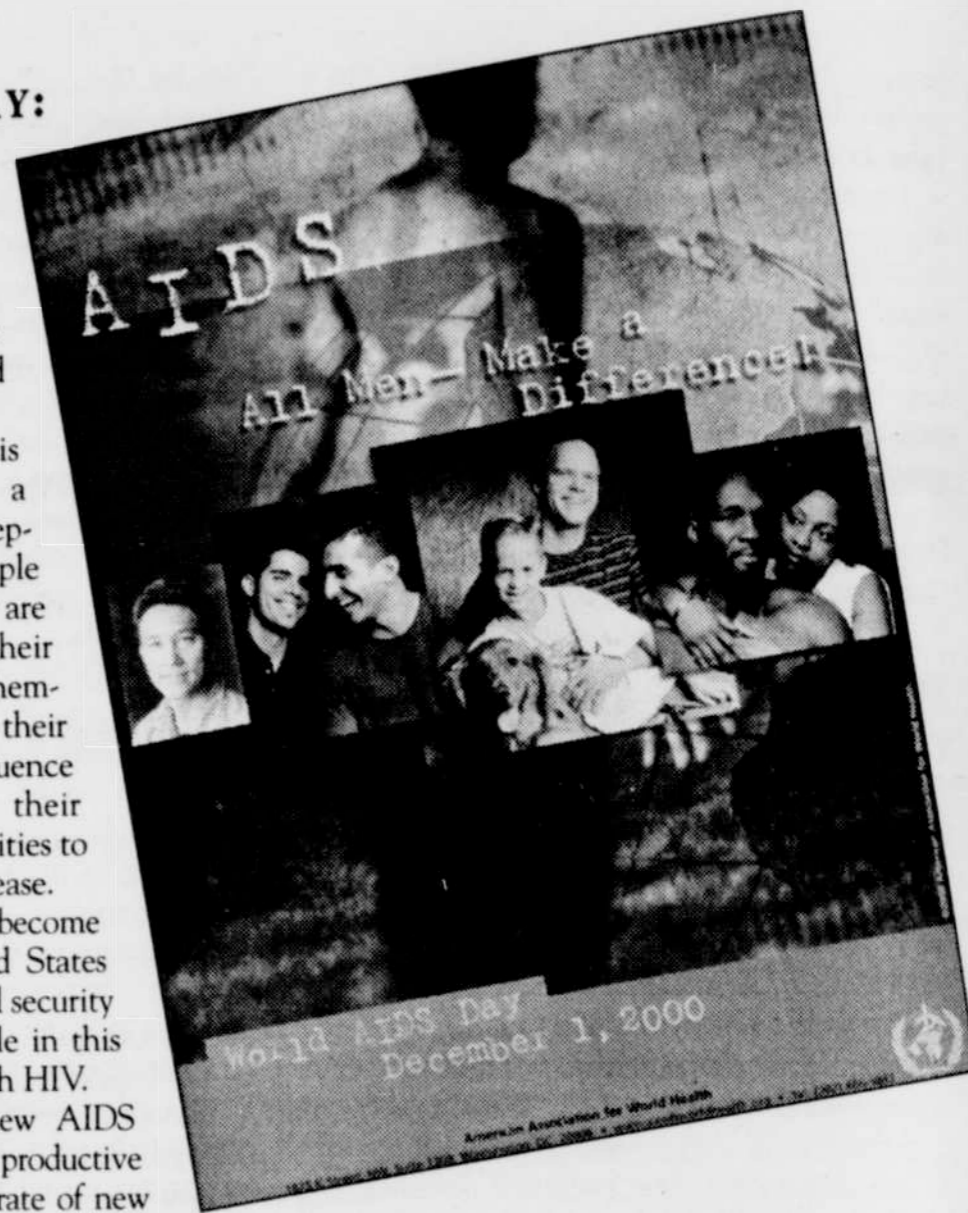
- 1981: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describe a new disorder affecting five men in Los Angeles. The same disorder, later named acquired immune deficiency syndrome, is found in intravenous drug users in New York.
- 1982: The disease is diagnosed in a hemophiliac who received a tainted blood-clotting product.
- 1984: A U.S. team led by Robert Gallo and a French team led by Luc Montagnier announce almost simultaneously that they have isolated the virus that causes AIDS.
- 1985: The Food and Drug Administration licenses the first test to detect the human immunodeficiency virus in blood.
- 1987: The FDA licenses AZT, which prolongs the lives of AIDS patients. It is not available to many people because of the expense.
- 1988: The Office for AIDS Research, financed through the National Institutes of Health, is established.
- 1995: The FDA approves the first protease inhibitor for HIV treatment. Two others, including Crixivan, are approved the next year.
- 1996: A study shows that traces of HIV had disappeared from the blood of some patients taking protease inhibitors. The World Health Organization begins large-scale clinical trials of two U.S.-made preventive AIDS vaccines in Thailand and Brazil.
- 2000: The United Nations issues a report that 34 million people worldwide are living with AIDS and 19 million people have died.

**AFRICAN AMERICAN  
 HIV/AIDS VIGIL PLANNED**

The second annual African American HIV/AIDS vigil will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Oregon Convention Center, 777 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

"In Oregon, African Americans have a higher HIV infection rate than any other population," said Oregon Health Division administrator Martin Wasserman, who will speak during the event. "This community event is an opportunity for African Americans and others to gain awareness and insight into the impact of HIV and AIDS so they can mobilize to confront the disease."

The keynote speaker will be Wilbert Jordan, an African American internist practicing in Los



Angeles who has drawn national attention for his work on HIV and AIDS.

Maria Kosmetatos, Oregon Health Sciences University certified family nurse practitioner, will summarize her visit to Mutare, Zimbabwe, Portland's sister city, as part of the Africa AIDS Response effort. Chonitia Suhailah, Northeast Health Clinics Inc. community health educator, will unveil a second panel to the Oregon African American Quilt to commemorate the lives of people with HIV/AIDS.

Other featured speakers and performers will include state Rep. Jo Ann Bowman of Portland; a representative of state Sen. Avel Gordly's office; Corliss McKeever, African American Health Coalition president; Brian Crosby-Payne, African American HIV/AIDS mobilization and vigil coalition co-chair; and the Sisters of Soul Gospel Choir. The event will end with a candlelight vigil.

Dinner will be provided for the first 200 participants, so preregistration is strongly encouraged. Call Patti McMains at 503-731-4029 to make reservations.

**FREE CHRISTMAS TREES  
 FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS**

The giving season has begun. Free Christmas trees are available for people with AIDS who are unable to afford one or are too sick to obtain one on their own. They can be picked up in Northeast Portland, or delivery can be arranged.

The five-year-old program is being organized by Robin Chavis. He was motivated to arrange the tree giveaway when he started thinking about the financial strains the holiday season places on those who are burdened by chronic illness.

Chavis contacted almost 20 growers before he found Dan and Debbie Fischer of Colton. He said they are wonderful people.

Last year, the couple donated 50 trees. This year, the program will give away about 35.

Dan Fischer helps deliver some of the trees. Chavis said he thinks the couple find meaning in seeing the trees they've nurtured for seven years end up in the homes of people who so need and enjoy them.

One year, the two men stepped into a Caribbean-themed party when they delivered one of the donated trees. A sick young man rested on the sofa while he and his friends drank