

the full extent of the law, HRC asserts.

Aside from McCann, the organization has sent letters to the mayor and county executive, urging them to investigate the murder fully. The case would be the first in Milwaukee's history to use Wisconsin's hate crimes law as it applies to sexual orientation.

NATIONAL

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Employees of the Federal Government said Dec. 19 the Office of Personnel Management was shortsighted in deciding to forgo using its authority from Congress to expand a new long-term health care insurance program to include same-sex domestic partners. The decision also will hurt the government's ability in the long run to compete with private industry for valuable talent.

"The federal government already discriminates against the gay and lesbian federal employee in its benefits package by prohibiting health insurance and retirement annuity coverage for same-sex domestic partners," said Kittie Durham of Federal GLOBE's board of directors. "Today's decision compounds that discrimination."

Kay Coles James, Office of Personnel Management director, made the decision not to expand the eligible groups beyond those identified in the law and thus to exclude domestic partners from the Long-Term Care Insurance for the Federal Family program. "We will visit the issue of additional groups of qualified relatives once the program is up and running successfully for the core groups identified in statute," officials said Dec. 18.

About 150 Fortune 500 companies offer domestic partner benefits to their employees, including long-term health care insurance and the traditional packages available to those in legally recognized marriages. They also generally offer higher pay and better compensation than the federal government.

Research released Dec. 18 found an alarming increase of drug resistance among HIV-positive individuals. The study, presented by Dr. Douglas Richman at the American Society for Microbiology's annual meeting on infectious diseases, sampled 2,000 people from 33 states.

Of the 63 percent with detectable HIV, 78 percent carried a strain resistant to at least one drug. Overall, 49 percent of the people in the survey carried a strain of resistant virus.

"This study is a chilling reminder of the ever-changing face of AIDS in America," said Harriet Babbitt, AIDS Action executive director. "Despite significant advances in HIV/AIDS science and treatment over the last 20 years, this study underscores the continuing urgency of funding for care, research and prevention programs necessary to address the new hurdles we face in our fight against HIV and AIDS."

HIV/AIDS activists expressed disappointment Dec. 20 about the lack of money appropriated by Congress for fiscal year 2002 programs. The resources provided fail to keep

pace with the growing need—particularly in the areas of prevention, care and treatment—to combat new infections on the rise, they say.

The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act, which draws support from both Democrats and Republicans, received an increase of \$103.1 million over President Bush's request of \$1.8 billion. But the boost for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program fell short at \$50 million, of which \$40 million will go toward the rising costs of medication, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

"We are disappointed with the inadequate response because the need for increased funding for HIV and AIDS has never been greater," said Christopher Labonte, senior policy advocate. "More and more states are being forced to further limit and in some cases close their ADAP programs to new enrollment because of increased need and too little money from the federal government."

Prevention spending, which jumped \$38 million for a total of \$691.5 million, is not enough to implement the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's five-year plan, HRC says. On a positive note, bipartisan efforts led to more research money at the National Institutes of Health, which received an increase of \$3 billion.

PENNSYLVANIA

AIDS activist and author Larry Kramer underwent liver transplant surgery Dec. 21 at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, The Associated Press reports. He was moved out of the intensive care unit and was upgraded to fair condition Dec. 26.

Kramer suffered from end-stage liver failure caused by hepatitis B. He had been waiting seven months for a new liver.

The transplant was significant because many doctors oppose the surgery for HIV-positive patients. Activist Jeff Getty of Survive AIDS in California, who received baboon bone marrow cells in 1995, said similar procedures now might become more common.

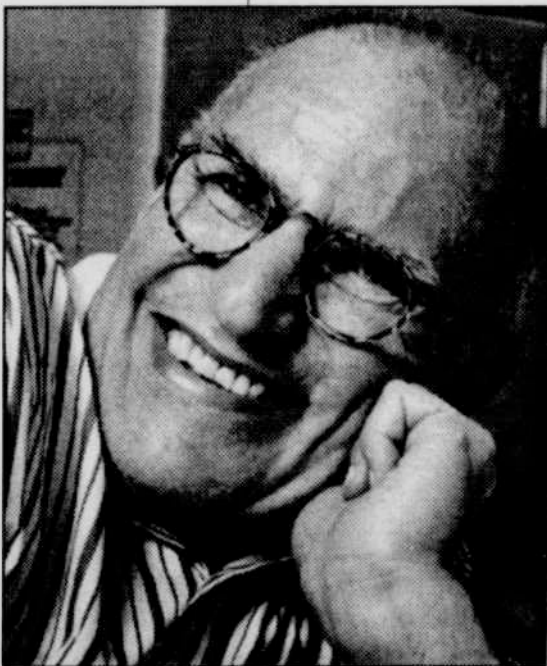
"Our group is extremely happy about this because we have been working on trying to get access to organ transplants for nearly four years," he told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. "We knew someone like

Larry Kramer getting a liver transplant would lead to worldwide attention, so we're on pins and needles. We see this as an important turning point in changing consciousness."

Kramer, 66, wrote the plays *The Destiny of Me* and *The Normal Heart* and the novel *Faggots*. He was nominated for an Academy Award in 1969 for his screenplay *Women in Love*.

Kramer was one of 80 men who met in August 1981 after a *New York Times* article announced a "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals." Less than six months later, this fund-raising group became Gay Men's Health Crisis. **JN**

Compiled by News Editor JIM RADOSTA, who can be reached at jim@justout.com.



AIDS activist and author Larry Kramer is recovering from liver transplant surgery

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