

Groups Downplay Risk of AIDS: They call transmission worries alarmist

The Associated Press

ATLANTA - Groups ranging from the American Medical Association to the American Civil Liberties Union told federal officials Thursday that the risk of getting AIDS from a doctor doesn't warrant mandatory testing of health workers.

The first of two days of hearings on the issue by the national Centers for Disease Control brought out dozens of doctors, medical groups and political coalitions with opinions about what, if anything, should be done in the wake of the discovery that three Florida patients got the AIDS virus from their dentist.

Several groups also took the occasion to blast a centers' draft report containing an estimate of the risk to patients of infected physicians. One called the estimate "a very large instance of mush."

Officials of the Medical Association and the American Dental Association have recommended that AIDS-infected practitioners either notify their patients or give up surgery.

"A physician who has a transmissible and fatal disease should not place his or her patients at risk," Dr. Nancy Dickey, an Medical Association trustee, said.

But mandatory testing would be over-reacting to a very slight risk, she said, adding, "we should not lose sight of the fact that physicians also have rights."

"Do patients have a 'right to know?'" asked Dr. Neil Schram of the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights. "Because of the infinitesimal risk, we don't think so."

Michael Merdian of the National Association of People With AIDS, which opposes mandatory testing, said, "It's not the CDC's job to worry about the ADA, the AMA or the insurance companies."

Officials of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the union for 350,000 health care workers, and a half dozen other organizations called for increased safety measures for health care workers to protect both patients and practitioners, instead of testing.

Dr. William Roper, the director of the centers, said a patient's right to know whether his doctor or dentist is a threat to his health is "a fundamental question in medicine, but it's not a simple question and we really can't give ... a simplistic answer."

The centers will take more testimony today and will receive written comments for 30 days after that before taking any action.

Several organizations blasted the center's draft report estimating the risk of AIDS to patients of infected dentists as somewhere between 1 in 263,000 and 1 in 2.6 million. For patients of infected surgeons, the estimated risk ran from 1 in 42,000 to 1 in 417,000.

The centers arrived at the figures by multiplying three estimates: Propensity for cuts during treatment, subsequent contact with a patient's wound and the risk of AIDS virus transmission.

Several specialists said the limited studies on those subjects don't permit using the data like that.



Dorothy Ledford

Ledford Earns Recognition

By Brent Merrill

Being honored as Nanitch Sahallie's employee of the month is an important honor for housekeeping supervisor Dorothy Ledford. She is respected by her fellow employees because of willingness to work hard and her ability to maintain a pleasant attitude.

"I try to give 100% all the time," explained Ledford. "I have always done that and I take pride in my work." Keeping busy is no problem for Ledford, she has plenty of responsibilities to keep her active. As the center's housekeeping supervisor her duties include cleaning all the rooms, bathrooms, hallways, staff offices and the lobby. She also takes care of the client's weight room, the laundry room and she takes care of all the trash as well as maintaining the facility's overall cleanliness.

Ledford said that the high points of her job comes when she gets the opportunity to interact with the clients. "When the clients come in I take them around and show them the facilities and I introduce them to everyone." Ledford then shows the clients their room and gives them their bedding. Dorothy explained that when she is at work she gets the most pleasure from the people at the center, "especially the kids. Most of the kids are looking for somebody that they can talk to. Even the smallest thing you say can affect them."

Ledford believes her role in relationship to the clients is one of support. "I just try to be there when they (the clients) need somebody to listen to them," she said. "If I tell them something I follow through."

Dorothy, who grew up in the Roseburg area in the small town of Canyonville, Oregon, brings a wealth of experience to her present position. She worked for Douglas Community Hospital for over 20 years. She worked in the operating room, in obstetrics and in the intensive care unit.

Dorothy and her husband have 8 children and 12 grandchildren. Her son, Jerry Ledford in the Persian Gulf on the U.S.S. Vancouver.

LOOKING FOR WORK?

Are you in need of a job, job search skill, resume writing or classes in typing or computers? The Siletz JTPA Program will have a program from 1 - 3 pm to explain program eligibility and program services. Please plan to attend.

Northwest Indian Veterans Association

Questionnaire

Notice to Tribal Members:

An informal meeting with representatives of the Northwest Indian Veterans Association will be held in Grand Ronde depending on the response of this questionnaire. The meeting will be for the purpose of determining the interest in Grand Ronde for establishing a chapter of the Northwest Indian Veterans Association (N.I.V.A.)

1. Would you be interested in participating in a N.I.V.A. chapter in Grand Ronde ?

2. Are you aware of the possible benefits you could receive by participating in a N.I.V.A. chapter ?

Please complete this form and return it to the Tribal newsletter office as soon as possible. The meeting will take place depending on the response to this questionnaire. No dues will be collected at this time and refreshments will be provided.

NORTHWEST INDIAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 PHONE #: _____
 D.O.B. _____
 SERVICE #: _____
 DATES OF SERVICE _____ TO _____
 BRANCH: _____
 TRIBE(S): _____
 RANK AT TIME OF DISCHARGE: _____
 WAR ZONE SERVED: _____ (Vietnam, Korea, WWI, WW II, Cuba)
 OTHER OVERSEAS DUTY STATIONS: _____
 NATIVE AMERICAN SOCIETIES: _____
 COMBAT DECORATIONS: _____ DISABLED? _____
 EMPLOYED? _____ YES _____ NO
 EDUCATION: _____
 MARITAL STATUS: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 SPECIAL INTERESTS AND SKILLS: _____

Veterans organizations all over the country are becoming active in chapters like this one. We at Grand Ronde believe the time has come for our Tribal Veterans to receive the benefits due to them.