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City of Columbus
Mayor Gregory S. Lashutka

Columbus Health Department

William C. Myers, M.S., Health Commissioner

The Ollie M. Goodloe Health Center
181 Washington Boulevard
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4096

August 4, 1993

Kristine Gebbie, R.N., M.S.
National AIDS Policy Coordinator
Room 729 H
HHH Building
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Kris,

Congratulations on your appointment by President Clinton as the first National AIDS Policy Coordinator. We were very pleased to learn of your selection, as you bring both a strong commitment and knowledge of HIV/AIDS at the state and local levels.

We would like to offer our support in any way we can in your new role. We look forward to federal support and direction in AIDS policies. We appreciated the opportunity to present testimony at the President's Commission on the Human Immunodeficiency Virus Epidemic and at the National Commission on AIDS.

Our AIDS Program is involved in HIV/AIDS education, planning, services and community-wide coordination. Our city has the highest rate of HIV infection in Ohio and continues to see a disproportionate number of gay-bisexual, male-related cases compared to many other cities throughout the U.S. We are working now to try to "recharge and re-motivate" our gay community to develop a community-wide safer sex norm. An Information Sheet on this issue is attached.



Administration	645-6228
Ambulatory Services	645-7766
Environmental Health	645-8191
Medical Services	645-7367
Nursing & Rehabilitation	645-6460
FAX	645-7633
TDD	645-7041

Board of Health

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Joseph S. Backiewicz, D.D.S.	

Kristine Gebbie, R.N., M.S.

August 4, 1993

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We are also enclosing the summaries of the Columbus Health Department's "HIV/AIDS Issues for 1993" and "HIV/AIDS Program Activities." These offer an overview of our department's commitment.

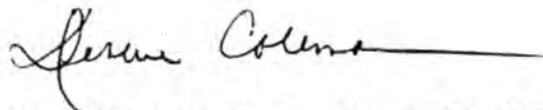
The Columbus Health Department offers itself as a resource to you and looks forward to working with you and your colleagues at the federal level.

Again, congratulations on your appointment. We wish you every success.

Yours truly,



William C. Myers, M. S.
Health Commissioner



Deborah A. Coleman, M.S., R.N., C.S.
Director, AIDS Program

WCM/DAC/dkd
Enclosures - 2

HIV/AIDS IN COLUMBUS

PERSPECTIVES ON MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

Columbus Health Department Information Sheet
May, 1993

- In 1989 AIDS became the leading cause of death in white males ages 25-44 in Franklin County and the third leading cause of death in black males of this age.
- Over 80% of AIDS cases reported in Franklin County are in gay and bisexual men. Columbus has the highest rate of AIDS in the state and new cases continue to reflect a disproportionate number of gay-bisexual related cases compared to cities like Cleveland, New York and Miami.
- Data from the HIV Counseling and Testing Site at the CHD indicate that gay/bisexual men comprise the largest target population testing HIV positive. Men reporting sex with men accounted for nearly three out of four persons testing HIV positive in 1992.
- Data obtained during interviews at the test site show several disturbing trends. First, some individuals are using testing as a prevention method. Second, the adoption of rigorous prevention behaviors does not always follow the testing experience. Moreover, there is a common belief in Columbus that AIDS is an older man's disease.
- Last June, six of the 55 males tested at the Gay Pride Parade were HIV positive. Four of these individuals had previously tested negative and were between the ages of 20 - 29.
- Park activity has been increasing since the closure of many area adult bookstores.
- After an initial decline to minimal usage, the bathhouse is now reporting a booming business. Reports describe unsafe sexual practices as very common and known HIV-infected individuals having sex without condoms.
- It appears that the level of denial among men having sex with men in the African-American community is very high. An informal network exists in which sexual liaisons can be established. To date, there has been "minimal targeted" programming to reach these individuals.
- In 1990, the Columbus Health Department completed a survey entitled, "A Survey About AIDS in Men". Data was collected anonymously from 506 gay/bisexual men from communities that had been targeted for HIV education. Only 43% reported practicing safer sex all the time.
- Also, in 1990, the Columbus AIDS Task Force assisted in a survey of 390 gay men in local gay bars. Condom use was reported by only 47% of the respondents.
- Our city has a high frequency of unsafe sexual behaviors among gay/bisexual men. There appears to be a lack of peer pressure and minimal expectation that safer sex is the norm.

HIV-AIDS ISSUES IN COLUMBUS, 1993

COLUMBUS HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The second decade of HIV/AIDS will be difficult as we are in the midst of a mature HIV epidemic with enormous service needs. One million Americans are infected with HIV – one in every 100 men and one in every 800 women. By the end of 1993, the cost of treating all patients diagnosed with HIV will top 10 billion annually.

To date, 673 Franklin County residents have been reported as cases of AIDS, and an estimated 4,000 persons are living with HIV infection. In addition, our community continues to provide treatment and support to many persons returning or relocating to Columbus.

Nationwide, adolescents are the fastest growing population of HIV infected persons. In this population, we are battling the triple public health epidemic of HIV, sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) and pregnancy.

Also the complex interrelationships of HIV, substance abuse and TB are critical in the future direction of managing the epidemic.

Shrinking federal and state dollars, as well as public apathy, threaten the progress our community has made in battling this epidemic. We must continue to make prevention of the spread of infection a priority, provide comprehensive services for those living with HIV and provide leadership in the public health response to AIDS.

Education and Prevention

- Reaching at-risk individuals to prevent or reduce behaviors or practices which transmit HIV including:
 - men who have sex with men
 - persons with multiple sex partners
 - persons with chemical dependency
 - teens
 - minority populations
- Maintaining ongoing safer sex behavior changes through programs that encourage abstinence and maintaining monogamous relationships, the appropriate use of condoms and working with infected persons to protect others.
- Increasing individual's knowledge of HIV serostatus through expanded counseling and testing sites and outreach services.
- Providing education and consultation for health care workers.

Services

- Improving referral to appropriate prevention and treatment services.
- Stabilizing continuum of care services for all affected populations
- Providing safe, affordable housing options
- Caring for increasing numbers of persons with limited income, insurance, and/or support systems.
- Learning to manage HIV as a chronic disease as the lifespan is being expanded with new therapies and treatments.
- Expanding community-based services to be accessible to all populations.
- Coordinating HIV and TB efforts.

Planning

- Expanding funding levels for AIDS through new sources of funding.
- Monitoring the HIV epidemic and responding proactively to new trends.
- Maintaining active community-wide involvement and planning through coalitions and committees.
- Developing sound workplace policies.
- Advocating for science-based public policy at national, state and local level.
- Fostering cooperative collaborative relationships among agencies and groups that may compete for resources.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of education and service delivery programs.

COLUMBUS HEALTH DEPARTMENT

HIV/AIDS ACTIVITIES

May, 1993

Distributed by

AIDS Program
181 Washington Blvd.
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4096
(614) 645-6446



"Caring today for a healthier tomorrow"

**COLUMBUS HEALTH DEPARTMENT
HIV/AIDS ACTIVITIES**

Distributed by
AIDS Program - 645-6446
May, 1993

The purpose of this resource is to provide an overview of HIV/AIDS Activities both within the department and the community. We hope you will find it helpful and will be glad to provide additional information as to how we can better serve you.

1. **HIV/AIDS EDUCATION AND PREVENTION** - This activity is a key component of the department's AIDS Program. Services include a Speaker's Bureau for AIDS presentations to churches, schools, health care providers, behavioral risk groups, treatment centers, workplaces, and community-based organizations. Educational materials such as brochures, videotapes and posters are distributed, as well as press releases and television programming.

In addressing AIDS education and prevention, we make use of both traditional and non-traditional methods. We have instituted educational programming and inservices for health care providers, human services and community-based organizations, as well as schools, churches, and workplaces. Educational materials such as brochures, videotapes and posters are distributed, as well as promoting special events to increase community awareness, such as a World AIDS Day, National Condom Week and AIDS Awareness Week.

We have also been challenged to find creative and innovative methods for reaching individuals who engage in high-risk behaviors. We have initiated outreach to adult bookstores, gay bars, and have developed a program designed to increase awareness and availability about the use of condoms to appropriately targeted populations. Information in our general public presentations have been expanded to include additional information focusing on behaviors, sexuality and risk reduction.

2. **HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE** - At the local health department, the most common method of gathering information is through surveillance; the systematic collection of data about specific diseases. There is a national surveillance system in place for AIDS. Specialized report forms are sent first to the local health department, then to the state health department where the names are removed and, finally, to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Local HIV and AIDS data are monitored by the Columbus Health Department and utilized frequently in program planning, disease prevention strategies and educating community leaders and organizations. AIDS surveillance reports are prepared and distributed on a regular basis.

Since 1989, HIV has been a reportable disease in Ohio. Reports are received directly from laboratories.

3. **HIV COUNSELING AND TESTING SERVICES** - Anonymous counseling and testing for HIV infection is offered at the health department Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 A.M., 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M., Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. and 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. The clinic is closed on Monday. The department recommends testing for anyone who participates in high-risk behavior, or anyone who feels they may have been exposed to HIV infection. ELISA tests are performed by our certified Public Health Laboratory. A donation of \$5.00 is requested.

Since May, 1985, we have counseled and tested nearly 120,000 individuals, over 16,000 in 1992. Confidential testing is available through our STD Clinic.

4. **PARTNER NOTIFICATION** - Partner notification services are offered at the health department's HIV Counseling and Testing Site. Specially trained and experienced Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) counsel all HIV positive persons about the importance of informing current and past sex and/or needle-sharing partners of their infection. HIV positive persons are encouraged to contact their own partners. DIS staff provide coaching and role playing assistance to individuals to prepare them to undertake the notification. For those who want their partners notified, but do not wish to tell them themselves, DIS staff will provide sensitive person-to-person notification of the exposure to HIV. The anonymity of the HIV positive person is maintained. DIS staff receive psychological training and on-going support services to enhance their capacity to perform this critically important work.
5. **SUPPORT SERVICES** - HIV Counseling and testing site clients are provided with appropriate referrals to community resources, i.e. physicians, mental health professionals, and legal assistance. Information is dispersed to clients by Disease Intervention Specialists on availability and accessing services and community support groups available for people infected with, affected by, or at risk for HIV.

6. **STREET OUTREACH PROGRAM** - The Street Outreach Program was developed to provide an HIV/AIDS education and risk reduction program for injection drug users and/or male and female prostitutes. The program has since expanded to include any individual practicing a behavior that puts him/her at risk for HIV infection. The street outreach workers provide one-on-one education in those areas frequented by the targeted high risk behavior. The education is geared to the individual's high risk behavior and providing "realistic" lifestyle change options. The majority of those individuals outreached receive repeated interventions. These individuals often have daily contact with the outreach workers. This frequent contact results in the acceptance and trust of the outreach workers and with this comes behavior changes.

The areas targeted for street outreach include the near east side, short north, Parsons Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Franklinton, Hilltop, local homeless shelters, half-way houses, bars, parks and the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority apartment complexes.

HIV and syphilis testing are offered to the outreach participants by the outreach workers. Mobile counseling and testing services are also provided on a regular basis to locations such as bars, college campuses and shelters.

7. **AIDS INFORMATION** - Free, anonymous call-in service is available from trained personnel to provide HIV related information and referrals by accessing the National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-342-AIDS; Ohio AIDS Hotline, 1-800-332-AIDS and the Spanish Hotline 1-800-344-SIDA.

Columbus Health Department HIV counseling and testing information is available by calling 645-7772. AIDS Program information and requests are available at 645-6446.

8. **HOME CARE SERVICES** - The Columbus Health Department Nursing and Rehabilitation staff provide Home Care, Hospice and Maternal Child Health services to HIV infected and affected clients. The Home Care and Hospice Program provide registered nurses to perform assessments and deliver intermediate and skilled care, with personal care delivered by home health aides. Social services are provided by licensed social workers and are available on a limited basis. Additional social services, clergy and volunteer services are available through Hospice. Maternal Child Health programs provide nursing and personal assistance services to HIV infected mothers and at-risk or infected infants. All home care services network with diverse community agencies to meet the complex needs of their clients.

9. **POLICY/PROGRAM CONSULTATION** - The Columbus Health Department provides assistance to child care agencies, law enforcement agencies, schools and workplaces in the development and implementation of appropriate policies regarding HIV infection. Assistance is also given to individuals and agencies in the community for the content and development of AIDS programming.
10. **AIDS/DRUG OUTREACH PREVENTION PROGRAM** - The Dayton-Columbus project is a regional, two city program of research and education and case management targeting IV and/or crack-cocaine users. This project is a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA). The Columbus site is strategically located in an area which is very accessible to the target population. The goals of the cooperative agreement are to: (1) monitor the nature and extent of drug use and HIV-related risk taking behavior in an out-of-treatment drug-using population and, (2) assess the efficacy of various interventions designed to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS. All participants receive basic HIV/AIDS education and a Risk Behavior Assessment (RBA) interview at the first visit. The participants are randomized into one of three intervention tracts for the remainder of the project. The Standard Intervention (SI) Tract includes the CDC HIV post-test protocol; Enhanced 1 (En1) Intervention Tract includes the SI, plus in depth HIV/AIDS education and additional Health Screening Test; and the Enhanced 2 (En2) Intervention Tract includes information from En1, plus case management. The participants are recontacted for 6 and 12 month follow-up.
11. **MINORITY AIDS OFFICE** - The Minority AIDS Office is responsible for community education, linking minority programs to available services at the Columbus Health Department, as well as coordinating minority AIDS projects and activities to ensure accessibility and cultural sensitivity for affected and infected minority populations.

The Minority AIDS Specialist serves in an advisory capacity to the HIV/AIDS Community Advisory Coalition committees regarding community awareness, trends in education and services, and accessing needs and/or gaps related to the minority community.

The Minority AIDS Office has also developed and implemented a mechanism for minority community involvement with AIDS related issues through the HIV/AIDS Consortium for People of Color. The Consortium's mission is to destroy nonproductive myths through increased community awareness of HIV, and increased collaboration and networking of social, health, and other community agencies, as well as recruiting concerned minority individuals. Projects include participation in minority community events, i.e. annual Coming Home Festival, health fair and conference exhibits, radio and T.V. shows, as well as Consortium planned events. The Minority AIDS Office provides resources to the minority community regarding funding, special projects, education and service opportunities.

12. **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE (STD) PROGRAM** - Confidential or anonymous HIV testing, HIV education and screening for HIV signs and symptoms are provided. Diagnosis and treatment are offered for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, NGU, herpes trichomonas and genital warts. Screening for additional STD's is also provided. For more information, call the STD Information Line at 645-7772.
13. **PROJECT SAFE** - The Year 2000 objectives for HIV infection note that condoms and instructions for their use should be made more widely available through health care providers who offer services to sexually active men and women. During National Condom Week, 1991, we introduced Project "SAFE!", an HIV prevention program with a goal to increase condom availability and awareness in our community. This project initially targeted community agencies and health department programs. Participants are provided with a start-up packet, which includes condoms, instructions for use, distribution and purchase, information brochures, posters and community resources. Some agencies receive condom samples, others receive an ongoing supply. To date, over 300,000 condoms have been distributed in over 40 sites. An evaluation of participating agencies showed that the agencies are distributing the condoms and literature and receiving favorable public reaction. We believe this approach minimizes access and acceptance barriers and encourages area providers to take a more active role in HIV prevention. Expansion of the project is now underway to include other provider systems, private businesses and colleges and universities in the area.
14. **COLUMBUS/FRANKLIN COUNTY AIDS EDUCATION TEACHING GUIDE** - This guide has been developed by teachers in the Franklin County School systems to provide age-appropriate and region-appropriate HIV education. Units have been developed for elementary, middle and high school, which include behavioral objectives, methods, strategies, resources and evaluations. This 235 page guide has been distributed to all 17 school districts and was revised in January, 1990. A 77 slide program with script supplement this program. In 1989, the guide was recognized by educators as one of the best in the nation by the Council for Exceptional Children.
15. **AIDS AWARENESS WEEK** - AIDS Awareness Week is an annual event in May sponsored by the Ohio Department of Health. Each year, the Columbus Health Department initiates and participates in a variety of activities designed to increase attention to the AIDS epidemic. The media is involved all week through kick-off ceremonies, TV/newspaper interviews, public service announcements and appearance by health department staff on local television shows. Other activities include numerous educational presentations, displaying posters by middle school students, and combined campaigns with other AIDS service and education providers in the community.

16. **HIV NETWORK** - An intradepartmental staff committee that began initial assessment and planning on department AIDS activities in February, 1987. Members represent all 5 department divisions: Ambulatory Services, Environmental Health, Medical Services, Nursing and Rehabilitation and Planning and Administration and reflect departmental expertise in direct service, prevention and grantsmanship. The committee provides a forum for updates, planning, data sharing and problem solving and sharing information received at conferences and seminars.

17. **PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS/TESTIMONY** - Health department personnel participate and represent the program at AIDS conferences, present research papers and staff poster sessions. In the past, papers have been presented at the local, state, national and international levels.

The department is involved in influencing local, state and national policy through expert testimony. In September, 1990 the Health Commissioner presented testimony to the National Commission on AIDS.

18. **AIDS EDUCATIONAL UPDATES** - Each month an inservice is provided to the staff in the Division of Nursing and Rehabilitation, Ambulatory Services and Neighborhood Health Centers, as a means to provide up-to-date information on HIV related topics and resources. The updates provide a time to network, voice concerns and questions, while addressing means to deal with the psychosocial impact of providing care to HIV infected/affected clients. Continuing Education Credits are offered, 50-60 staff attend the inservices. These are coordinated by the AIDS Nursing Care Specialist.

19. **COLUMBUS/FRANKLIN COUNTY AIDS COMMUNITY PLAN (1989 - 1991)** - The plan is based on a human service interagency project that conducted a community needs assessment for AIDS with corresponding recommendations. This data was used to develop goals and recommendations for community-wide and targeted education, services and planning. Current efforts are concentrated on plan implementation. Revision of the plan was completed in 12/90, by HIV Services Planning Grant. The plan has been widely distributed and received national recognition and is being reviewed in 1993.

20. **AIDS COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS 1992 - 93 (Year 6)**

Education Grants

Columbus AIDS Task Force General Community and Gay/Bisexual Male Education	\$53,458.00
Columbus Urban League General Community and Workplace Education	\$23,189.00
Diversified Community Services, Inc. Education with Churches and Youth	\$16,260.00
Southeast Community Mental Health Education of Homeless, Youth and Severely Mentally Disabled	\$22,263.00
Neighborhood House	\$ 25,000.00

Service Grants

AIDS Service Connection Home-based Services Housing Referral Project SAFE!	\$24,225.00 \$13,325.00 \$ 5,000.00
Columbus AIDS Task Force Buddy Training Case Management Client Assistance	\$26,860.00 \$88,500.00 \$15,000.00
Ohio AIDS Coalition Healing Weekends	\$ 9,595.00
Southeast Community Mental Health Center Counseling for HIV Affected Persons	\$15,325.00

The request for proposals is issued in late winter with an April due date. Targeted priorities are issued for the grant monies. Columbus Health Department staff coordinate the grant process. Grant review is provided by Coalition committees and recommendations made to the Board of Health.

21. **COLUMBUS HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COALITION OF METROPOLITAN COLUMBUS** - The HIV/AIDS Community Advisory Coalition is a community organization, the purpose of which is to strengthen community capacity to respond to and prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS by providing leadership and advocacy for the ongoing development and implementation of responsive planning strategies for Columbus and Franklin County. This is accomplished through advocacy, planning for community education, coordination of community services and community capacity building. Formed in 1987, membership represents a broad spectrum of the community, including business, health care, law, clergy and human service organizations.

Accomplishments to date include the annual allocation of city-funded Community Action Grants and extensive community planning, including the report - Columbus/Franklin County AIDS Community Plan (1989-1991). Various committees, (Planning, Education, Services, Media and Public Relations, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual and Executive), provide advice and direction to the Board of Health, Mayor, City Council and Community. Staff support is provided by the Columbus Health Department, United Way, the ADAMH Board and Metropolitan Human Services Commission.

22. **PROVIDER COALITION** - The Columbus Health Department sponsored Coalition consists of over 20 local agencies, providing a wide range of HIV/AIDS related services in Columbus and Franklin County. The Provider Coalition is an open forum which meets every other month to coordinate and share information among providers. The overall goal is to enhance communication between agencies and discuss resource availability and accessibility, client services needs and service gaps.
23. **MEDIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS** - In February, 1993, a multi-media campaign for the Counseling and Testing Site entitled, "Testing Positive for HIV Can Save Your Life" was released. This effort was prepared by the Advertising Federation of Columbus, Inc.
24. **AIDS EDUCATOR FORUM** - The AIDS Educator Forum, facilitated by the Columbus Health Department, is comprised of individuals and agencies conducting AIDS education in Franklin County. Meetings are held on a monthly basis to share information, collaborate on joint projects, and to provide continuing education and updates on the most recent developments in AIDS.
- The forum is developing co-presentations and group events to show a coalition of all community groups. The forum also serves as an "ex-officio" support group for the local educators for dealing with the stress of day-to-day delivery of HIV information.

25. **GAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE** - An ad hoc, informal bimonthly meeting of leaders from the gay community in which subjects of mutual interest and concern are discussed. Formed in 1987, the committee has addressed AIDS related issues, such as outreach to the gay community, gay men's knowledge assessment and effective communication strategies.
26. **COORDINATION WITH COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES** - A key component for the AIDS program is to provide professional and technical assistance to agencies providing AIDS services, such as direct care, support and education. Essential to this effort is the sharing of information and join problem solving to expand, or improve, current services and prevent unnecessary duplication.
27. **COORDINATION OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL AIDS ORGANIZATIONS** - Staff serve in a variety of capacities as expert consultants to local and state health care organizations, including East Central AIDS Education and Training Center, Ohio Department of Health, Columbus and Franklin County Academy of Medicine, Ohio Nurses Association, Ohio Department of Human Services and the Ohio Health Care Provider HIV Education Workgroup.
28. **VOLUNTEERISM IN COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS** - AIDS program staff also volunteer in local AIDS activities with organizations, such as the Columbus AIDS Task Force, Columbus Urban League and the American Red Cross. Staff also participate in national professional organizations.
29. **HIV ROUNDTABLE** - A small collaborative group of agency policy makers who meet on a monthly/as needed basis to plan advocacy, link-services and strategic innovative pilot programming.

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