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It's official!

Inmate afflicted with ARC, not AIDS

By JOHN F. KILDUFF
Staff Writer

A spokesman for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Tuesday morning, confirmed that one of the two suspected AIDS inmates at the State Correctional Institute at Dallas (SCID) has a lesser form of AIDS known as Aids Related Complex (ARC) and the other inmate is AIDS free.

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Press Secretary Ken Robinson said the AIDS-free inmate, however, will remain in isolation until medical authorities can determine if he poses a threat to other inmates after being in isolation with the ARC prisoner.

ARC, according to Robinson, is "one step" below the severity of the AIDS virus which has killed over 7,000 people since 1981.

Robinson also stated that last Friday SCID medical officials found a third inmate who tested "positive" during the initial HTLV3 AIDS virus exam. The third inmate is now in isolation in the SCID medical infirmary.

Robinson expressed caution, however, stating an inmate with ARC only stands a five to 10 percent chance of actually having AIDS, according to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, GA.

The initial screening test known as the "H.T.L.V.3 Screening Test" is used to determine the antibody level within a patient's immune system. H.T.L.V.3 is believed to be the AIDS virus.

Since the issue of AIDS, inmates being housed at SCID became known two weeks ago, rumors of mass-testing for AIDS have been floating about.

According to Robinson, there are no current plans to conduct a mass-testing program for AIDS within Pennsylvania's 10 correctional facilities. In fact, said Robinson, the mass-testing procedure is something the medical community does not want.

"Most medical authorities feel that mass-testing is not a good idea," said Robinson. "The problem is that even though you can give all inmates a screening test, the results can be very misleading."

Robinson said only one to three percent of all people given an initial AIDS screening test actually are found to be stricken with the malady after further testing.

"In fact," said Robinson, "97 percent of all suspected AIDS victims are later found not to have AIDS even though they test positive in the initial screening."

"We (Department of Corrections) are trying to keep from stigmatizing inmates with this AIDS thing," Robinson added. "If prisoners suspected of having AIDS are later found not to have the disease, then it becomes hard to mainstream them back into the

prison population (due to the stigma of AIDS)."

The two inmates suspected of having AIDS are currently in isolation at SCID. Robinson said the isolation is actually for the good of the patient, not necessarily for the other inmates.

"Those two inmates are kept in isolation because if they actually have the AIDS disease then their immune systems will be susceptible to most ailments common to a prison," said Robinson. "They are not in isolation because they have AIDS. Again they have not yet been confirmed."

Currently, Pennsylvania's 10 Correctional Institutes, housing over 14,000 inmates, have three confirmed AIDS victims. All three AIDS inmates are being housed at the Camp Hill prison.

According to Robinson, the first step in testing a suspected AIDS inmate is the H.T.L.V.3 Screening Test, which was administered to the two SCID inmates three weeks ago.

The H.T.L.V.3 test determines if there are any antibodies present in the blood stream. A high number of antibodies in the blood stream indicates that the body is fighting off some type of virus or bacteria. That virus or bacteria could be, but not necessarily, the H.T.L.V.3 virus.

The second step in determining if an inmate has AIDS is a series of complicated test administered by

an immunologist. This testing usually confirms whether or not an inmate actually has AIDS.

Robinson also said that there has been a great deal of misinformation about the cause of death of an inmate suspected of having AIDS last month at Camp Hill.

"That inmate did not die of AIDS," Robinson said. "He died from a series of ailments such as stroke, heat attack and hypertension."

Robinson said the inmate was suspected of having AIDS after the screening test but that no followup test was taken to confirm the AIDS diagnosis.

"We do not even know if he had AIDS," said Robinson. "This whole issue (death of an AIDS victim in a Pennsylvania prison) has been blown out of proportion and I am glad to get a chance to straighten it out."

Robinson said the news media should be very careful when disseminating information about AIDS.

"Many of the headlines in your area," said Robinson, "scared the hell out of people. That is exactly what we are not trying to do. We need a concerted effort between the media and accurate information on our part to properly inform the citizens what is going on."

Test results on the two SCID inmates should be out by next week.

AIDS symptoms are not always the same

By JOHN F. KILDUFF
Staff Writer

A Pennsylvania Department of Health physician said Friday afternoon there is "no single set of symptoms" related to the killer, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Dr. Ernie Witte of the Department's Division of Epidemiology said people looking for a recognizable set of symptoms will be frustrated to know that each patient has the potential to show different symptoms.

"Currently, the medical community has come up with no single set of symptoms for AIDS," said Witte, a Department of Health physician for the past 33 years.

"An AIDS victim's symptoms will be determined by the type of infection the body picks up," Witte explained. "What we are talking about," said Witte, "is a virus which knocks out your body's defenses."

Witte said, for example, that one AIDS patient might show a series of unknown skin rashes while another AIDS patient might have swollen glands. The AIDS symptoms tend to vary greatly depending on the patient's age and condition of health, Witte said.

Witte did say there are a few "common" symptoms associated with known AIDS victims. Those being rapid weight loss, rapid aging, severe depression and night sweats.

Since 1981 there have been over 14,000 confirmed AIDS victims across the United States and half that amount (7,000) have died from the ailment.

The virus, which the medical community believes causes AIDS, is called the H.T.L.V.3 virus. Currently, testing for the AIDS virus involves an H.T.L.V.3 Screening test.

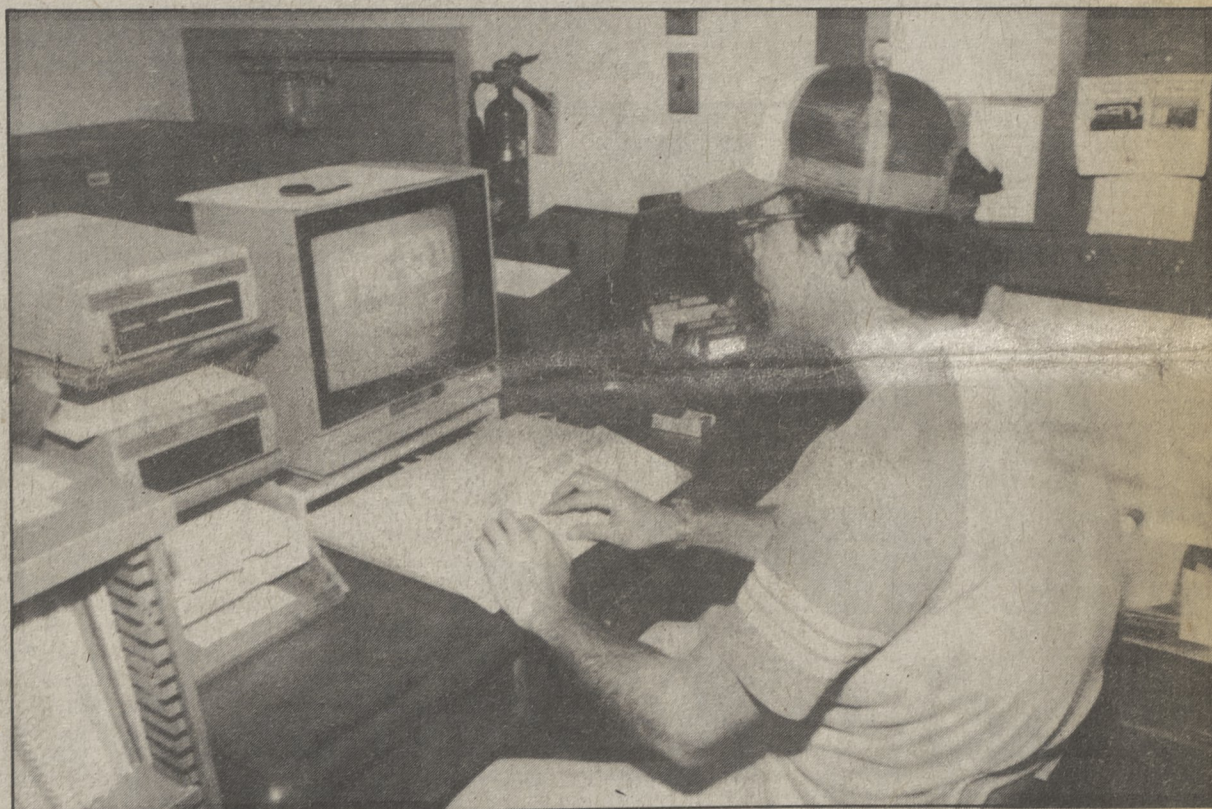
The H.T.L.V.3 Screening Test, according to Witte, is designed to measure the "antibody" level within a person's immune system.

Antibodies help fight off bacteria and any other viruses attacking the body.

"The H.T.L.V.3 test is not a diagnostic test," Witte explained. "It is a screening test which looks for the presence of antibodies. If a person takes a H.T.L.V.3 Screening Test and comes up positive (meaning high level of antibodies in his system), it does not mean that he or she has AIDS. All it means is that the body is creating antibodies to fight off some type of virus or infection. It does not necessarily have to be the AIDS virus."

Witte said the most commonly known methods of contracting AIDS are anal sexual contact, oral contact with an infected patient (fellatio), contaminated needles often used by drug users and blood transfusions.

Of the above mentioned methods of contraction, blood transfusions, said Witte, have seen the most dramatic decrease in passing the AIDS virus onto other patients.



Dallas Post/Ed Campbell

Prison studies

SCID inmate Michael Vaccarello of King of Prussia demonstrates in the prison's computer room how his "PRE-GED" test program works. The computer program is designed to prepare a student for the state GED high school diploma test.

Jeff Steinberg is a living masterpiece

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Correspondent

"A Master Piece in Progress," was the first song Jeff Steinberg sang for the congregation and friends at New Community Life Church in Orange, Sunday, Oct. 6.

I'm a masterpiece in progress, Steinberg said to the audience, following his first selection. He described every human as a masterpiece of God, everyone different but everyone a masterpiece of the Lord.

There is no such word as 'handicap' in young Steinberg's vocabulary. God changes lives, faith is beautiful, he said, and standing before the group, Sunday morning, Steinberg's message surmounted his handicaps.

The young man, 4 feet, six inches tall, born with no arms and deformed legs, exuded personality. His musical talent, his tremendous sense of humor, his charm overcomes all.

"Jeff Steinberg in Concert" was brought to the Back Mountain area last Sunday through the cooperation of the 'Glory Barn', or New Life Community Church. Steinberg, who has toured through Colorado, South Dakota, Michigan, Indiana, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut; sang on national telethons with Pat Boone and Donna Mills, sings in as many as three concerts a day before persons of all ages, is an inspiration to witness.

Wherever he appears, he leaves a strong impact on his audience through his concerts. His philosophy is that it is time to tell youth and

adults that they are not worthless, but that they have the makings of greatness. He touches all people with his vocal selections and his presentations.

Born in Philadelphia, Aug. 13, 1951, with no arms, two deformed legs and other complications, there was little hope of his living. Jeff's grandmother was the first of the family to see him. She called his father to come from work to the hospital. His father's first thoughts were of Jeff's mother. He decided no one was to tell her of her son's condition.

Jeff's mother did not know about it until Jeff was five months old. She didn't see him until he was 22 months of age and that was in a Children's Welfare Center. His father came to visit every week, and finally, Jeff's mother came, too.

Later, Jeff was admitted to the Shriner's Hospital for which he has the utmost praise. The first thing they did was correct his legs as much as possible. They straightened his right leg by breaking it and doing surgery. He went through a long period of rehabilitation, but he knew he would never be any taller than 4 ft. 6 inches in height. He still has no arms, but through miracles of modern medical science has the use a hook where he should normally have a right arm and hand.

Jeff was at Shriners Hospital for a long period of time. He learned to write with his feet and to feed himself with his feet. The doctors and nurses were like his family. His parents came to visit him on Sunday afternoons, but they visited from the lawn while he was inside on the porch. The year before he



JEFF STEINBERG

left the hospital that visiting rule was changed but a "two hour visit a week from your parents is not much," he said. When he left the hospital, Jeff went home with his parents and sisters, but he was there for only nine months.

"My mother could see only tragedy in my future, she didn't know how to cope," said Jeff. When he was nine years old, he was admitted to the Good Shepherd Home for the

Inmate: 'Prisoners need education to stay positive'

By JOHN F. KILDUFF
Staff Writer

Most Americans spend a large portion of their lives attending some type of school in preparation to enter society and become a productive citizen.

You begin with pre-school. Then, you have grade school followed by high school and even college for those who are fortunate enough to be able to afford it.

The idea behind America's educational system is to get an education, get a job and contribute to society as a hard-working taxpayer.

There is a Back Mountain "resident" who is well on his way to becoming a contributing member of society. He recently earned his Associates of Applied Science degree from Luzerne County Community College. He became a self-taught, along with some instruction, computer whiz.

He even recently wrote a computer program called "The Pre-GED Testing Program" designed to instruct students in all facets of the high school equivalency testing program.

This student also has received scores of job offers from major corporations with a starting salary of \$24,000. Sounds like a success story waiting to happen doesn't it? (See INMATES, page 12)

Township residents not using home loan program

A federally funded program offering low-interest home rehabilitation loans to certain Dallas Township residents has not been utilized by township residents, it was learned during last week's Dallas Township Board of Supervisors meeting.

The program, called the Home Rehabilitation Loan Assistance Program, offered through the Office of Community Development of Luzerne County, has set aside funds for low interest loans for people living in "target areas."

Dallas Township areas are the Roushey Plot, a portion of Fernbrook, and certain parcels of land within the Kunkle area.

Dallas Township Supervisor Frank Wagner said the main reason area residents are not utilizing the program is due to the many regulations and restriction related to the program.

Said Wagner of the loan program, "Many of these people just make

too much money according to the federal government, so they cannot use the program. We need some of the financial restrictions eased if we (Dallas Township) are going to take advantage of the program."

The Home Rehabilitation Loan Assistance Program offers a variety of loans for both home repairs and property improvements.

For instance, a homeowner with a family of four can qualify for a three percent loan if he earns no more than \$11,250 per year. Homeowners can also qualify for five, seven and nine percent loans if their family incomes are no more than \$18,000, \$22,500 and \$27,000 respectively.

With these guidelines, up to \$10,000 may be loaned to qualified homeowners.

The loan money, according to a spokesperson for the Luzerne County Office of Community Development, (See TOWNSHIP, page 12)

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