

# Battalion Classifieds

The Battalion

# WORLD & NATION

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## Transplants offer hope for AIDS

### Pro-life groups denounce use of fetus tissue for disease treatment

CHICAGO (AP) — Transplants of tissue from human fetuses offer hope in treating AIDS and other diseases, doctors said Monday, but they acknowledged the need to resolve ethical questions surrounding the practice.

Anti-abortionists have denounced procedures involving the use of tissue from fetuses obtained through spontaneous or induced abortions.

The transplants, mostly brain and glandular tissue, are supported by the American Medical Association's Council on Scientific Affairs and its Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs.

The councils urged continued federal funding for the transplants in a joint report discussed Monday during the AMA's annual policymaking convention.

The report notes that fetal-tissue transplants have "led to the development of a number of important research and medical advances."

But Dr. George M. Bohigian, chairman of the science council, and Dr. Russel H. Patterson Jr., chairman of the judicial group, acknowl-

edge the ethical dilemmas posed by such research.

At issue is the possibility that a decision to have an abortion will be coupled with a decision to donate fetal tissue for transplantation, they

exchange for financial remuneration above that which is necessary to cover reasonable expenses.

The authors note that the acquisition and use of tissue obtained from dead fetuses is governed by the Uni-

on the use of the fetal tissue for research, the doctors note.

And Arizona law bars post-mortem use of fetal remains for "medical experimentation" if the tissue is derived from an induced abortion, they note.

In one recent study involving human fetal tissue, liver cells and thymus and lymph glands transplanted into mice with impaired immune systems helped make those systems function properly. The doctors wrote that the effort may become a valuable model in studying AIDS.

Fetal brain tissue transplants also could offer promising advances in the treatment of diabetes and Parkinson's disease, they said. Fetal brain cells are still capable of growth, unlike adult brain cells.

Transplants using tissue from a fetus after spontaneous or induced abortion would appear to be analogous to the use of cadaver tissue and organs, the report said.

**"The principal ethical concern . . . is the degree to which the decision to have an abortion is separated from the decision to donate the post-mortem tissue."**

—doctors, -AMA council

wrote in the report.

"The use of fetal tissue for transplantation purposes is ethically permissible" when a number of conditions are met, they wrote. These conditions include:

- The recipient of the tissue is not designated by the donor.
- A final decision regarding abortion is made before initiating discussion of the transplantation use of fetal tissue.
- Fetal tissue is not provided in

form Anatomical Gift Act, "which has been adopted by all states and the District of Columbia."

The act permits the donation of fetal tissue for research purposes with the consent of either parent and without objection from the other.

However, several states have restrictive statutes governing the donation of fetal tissue for research.

Massachusetts and Michigan laws prohibit abortion if it is conditional

## Bentsen attempts to expand Medicaid

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Lloyd Bentsen introduced legislation Monday that would expand Medicaid health-care coverage to thousands of low-income children and pregnant women at an estimated annual cost of \$1 billion.

The Texas Democrat is attempting to provide Medicaid coverage to pregnant women and children younger than age 6 in families whose income is 185 percent of the poverty level — \$22,385 for a family of four.

Under legislation enacted last year and being phased in fiscal 1989 and 1990, Medicaid coverage is guaranteed to pregnant women and infants under age 1 in families whose income is at

the poverty level — \$12,100 for a family of four.

Bentsen's bill would expand coverage to an additional 300,000 pregnant women and 1.6 million children younger than age 6 in fiscal years 1990 and 1991, his office said.

The estimated cost of phasing in Medicaid coverage would be \$790 million the first year and \$1.2 billion in 1991.

"America is facing what one health group recently called a 'child health crisis' and we must respond to it," Bentsen said in remarks accompanying the bill. "American babies die at a higher rate than babies born in Singapore or 16 other coun-

tries. More than 40,000 infants die in this country every year."

Bentsen, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said the bill is aimed at assuring that the most vulnerable of the 37 million Americans who have no health insurance will have a chance to get basic health care.

Bentsen said 40 percent of children younger than age 4 don't even get their basic set of immunizations.

The Finance Committee has approved another Bentsen bill that would provide a child health care tax credit to help pay the cost of health insurance for children.

## High Court rules railroad worker drug tests legal

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court, in its first decision focusing on drug testing in private employment, ruled Monday that railroads may require tests for workers without bargaining with unions over the issue.

In a 7-2 ruling, the justices said Conrail — the Consolidated Rail Corp. — acted legally when it unilaterally decided to use urinalysis tests to check for drugs.

The court based its ruling on an interpretation of the federal Railway Labor Act. That law applies to airlines as well, but the ruling may have limited impact for employers and their workers outside those two

transportation industries.

The justices, in two key decisions last March, said workers in sensitive government jobs or entrusted with public safety in federally regulated work may be forced to undergo the tests.

A lawyer for railway workers said the unions will now look to Congress for help in assuring that drug tests are reliable and do not infringe on workers' privacy rights.

In the drug-testing case, Conrail decided in 1987 to check for drugs as part of a urinalysis administered to workers periodically and when they return to work after absences.

The tests were adopted originally

when Conrail was formed in 1976. But their primary purpose before 1987 was to check for physical fitness, not the presence of drugs. For example, the tests would reveal whether an employee had diabetes or other health problems.

Railway labor unions said adding the drug-screening component is a "major" labor-management dispute under the federal Railway Labor Act, and therefore must be submitted to union-management negotiations.

Minor disputes can be settled unilaterally by the railroad, although any decision is subject to arbitration. Justice Harry A. Blackmun, writ-

ing for the court, said the drug screening change is minor because "the action is arguably justified by the terms of the parties' collective bargaining agreement."

He added: "Conrail's well-established recognition of the relevance of drug use to medical fitness substantially weakens the union's claim that Conrail now, for the first time, is engaging in medical testing that reveals facts about employees' private off-duty conduct."

Justices William J. Brennan and Thurgood Marshall dissented Monday. Brennan, in an opinion for both, said the workers are entitled to more protection.

## Swedish official's widow identifies alleged killer

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) — The widow of Prime Minister Olof Palme pointed her finger across a hushed courtroom Monday and identified the man accused of killing her husband.

"I'm absolutely certain," Lisbeth Palme said when asked whether defendant Christer Pettersson was the man she saw a few feet away as Palme crumpled to the street with a fatal bullet wound.

Palme, the leading figure in Swedish politics for more than a decade, was shot and killed Feb. 28, 1986, as he and his wife were leaving a late movie downtown. Pettersson has denied his guilt.

Lisbeth Palme, who appeared on edge throughout her testimony, said she clearly saw the defendant's face but never looked at his hands to see whether he had a gun. She was slightly injured in the attack.

Lisbeth Palme's testimony was a breakthrough for the prosecution, which had suffered repeated setbacks since the trial began two weeks ago. Several witnesses had backed

away from earlier statements implicating Pettersson.

Pettersson, 42, was arrested in December. He has a long criminal record, which includes a conviction for manslaughter, and a history of drug and alcohol abuse.

"It will be difficult to let him go after this. If the court lets him off, they will have to justify their decision," said Clas Borgstrom, a criminal lawyer not directly involved with the case, in an interview with Swedish Radio.

Defense attorney Arne Lijerstedt told a news conference his client felt "distressed" after Lisbeth Palme's testimony.

Lisbeth Palme, walked sideways to hide her face from the 60 reporters in the room.

## Mexico officials hope pact lessens debt anxiety

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The government is hoping early renewal of an inflation-fighting pact will ease anxiety over prolonged foreign debt negotiations and bolster its position in the talks.

The latest extension of the year-and-a-half-old pact, announced last Sunday, makes no major changes in the one that expires July 31. It says prices will be held steady and the one-peso-a-day devaluation of the country's currency against the U.S. dollar will be maintained. It mentions no new minimum wage increase.

An agreement between the government and foreign commercial banks on their share of the country's \$107.4 billion foreign debt had been expected before the renewal was announced. Analysts say investors were becoming nervous over what both might contain, forcing the government to keep domestic interest rates high to keep capital in the country.

"The renewed pact strengthens Mexico's negotiating position" on the foreign debt, Carlos Salinas de Gortari said in a televised speech after the signing of the pact.

Unity among labor, private enterprise, the farm sector and the government in bringing down inflation through the series of pacts has won recognition from foreign governments and multilateral lending agencies, Salinas said. "Now opens a new space for us to not accept under pressure just any arrangement, but on the contrary to reach an adequate agreement," he said.

"It's true, we need to reach an efficient agreement quickly to meet our proposals for growth, but we are counting on internal strength to be able to accept what is convenient for Mexico," Salinas said.

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