

# HIV brings unwanted attention

JOHNTOWN (AP) — Students at a small northeast Texas high school where 3 percent of the student body has the AIDS virus said Thursday they were angry at attention focused on them and afraid for their future.

"I was devastated," said Julie Hammond, a 15-year-old sophomore. "I can't believe that many people, you know, have the AIDS virus."

"Should I be around them? Should I go out with this guy? You know, you're scared," Hammond said.

Six of the 197 students at the school have tested positive for human immunodeficiency virus, superintendent Freddy Wade confirmed at a news conference Thursday. The HIV infection rate is more than six times the national average of one in 250 people.

School officials don't know the students' identity, and will not

## Three percent test positive at northeast Texas high school

seek to find out or have them removed from school, Wade said.

"An individual has a right to privacy," he said. "I don't waste my time questioning it."

Some students were angry at the media for coming to the school Thursday after the cases were reported by The Dallas Morning News.

As television crews and reporters roamed hallways after Wade's news conference, they were met with shouts of "Go home!"

"I don't particularly like what's going on now," said B.J. Thompson, an 18-year-old senior. "It makes us look bad."

Neither school nor health offi-

cial could say why the six students sought testing. The six told health officials they contracted the virus through heterosexual sex.

Reliable statistics for HIV infection in Texas are not available, said officials at the Texas Department of Health. Of the 14,782 Texans with full-blown AIDS, 58 are between age 13 and 19, according to the department's survey updated last week.

School officials were informed in November that six students had the virus, but didn't tell teachers and students until December, Wade said. He added he had known of one case for about a year.

Parents have never been for-

mally notified, Wade said, although the community was aware of the situation.

"It was probably a gradual thing, where certain portions of our community probably knew and word of mouth," Wade said.

Students and health officials praised school authorities over their handling of the situation, giving them credit for averting a panic.

"They show us films and they're being real open," said Donna Strain, a 17-year-old senior. "I'm just kind of scared."

Teachers also have been issued rubber gloves and told to treat all injured students as if they have the AIDS virus.

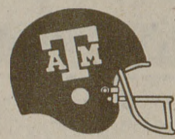
"I am so proud of that school district," said Dona Spence, HIV-AIDS case manager at the Ark-Tex Council of Governments in Texarkana where the six went for counseling.

# TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL

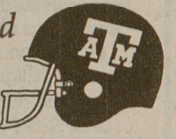
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## Insurance companies draw fire from state

AUSTIN (AP) — State officials and a civil rights advocate Thursday called for an investigation into insurance companies that they say refuse to sell health insurance to people who don't speak or read English.

"Not only do some health insurance companies turn you down if you are likely to get sick, but they'll turn you down if they don't like the way you talk or the way you read," said Amy Johnson, of the Office of Public Insurance Counsel.

Johnson, state Rep. Eddie Cavazos, and Norma Cantu of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund's regional counsel, said they want Texas Attorney General Dan Morales to investigate the matter.

Morales' office said it welcomed the opportunity to review the information and consider their request.

The three officials were armed with letters from insurance company representatives who are opposing a proposal before the State board of Insurance that would require insurers to print a toll-free assistance number in both English and Spanish on their policies.

"An individual who cannot speak, understand or read English at a minimal level is considered ineligible for our coverage," wrote G. Scott Smith, president and chief executive of National Health Insurance of Grand Prairie.

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## Universities see increase in minority enrollment

AUSTIN (AP) — Higher education officials said Thursday that increases in minority enrollment at Texas public universities accounted for all of the growth at the schools between fall 1990 and fall 1991.

The count released by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not include international students.

"The growth in our minority college enrollments underscores the effect minority recruitment and retention programs are having in our universities as many of our minority populations grow," said Higher Education Commissioner Kenneth Ashworth.

The number of Hispanic students increased to 61,297 in fall 1991, a 4.3 percent jump. The number of black students grew to 34,473, an increase of 3.4 percent from fall 1990.

The number of Asians grew nearly 7 percent to 14,549, and the number of Native Americans increased by 19 percent to 1,376.

The figure for whites fell by 1.7 percent during the same period, but still far out numbered that of other groups at a total of 276,019.

"Historically, blacks and Hispanics have not participated in higher education to the same degree as other groups. These new data, however, suggest an encouraging new trend for them and the state of Texas," said Betty James, the coordinating board's assistant commissioner for educational opportunity planning.