

# Hearing-impaired out of touch about AIDS, health officials say

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — There is no sign for AIDS yet among America's deaf, which shows just how out of touch the hearing-impaired community is about the deadly virus, officials say.

In Houston, over a two-year period, 22 percent of the more than 500 deaf patients tested positive for HIV-infection at one clinic.

"It's like they're five years behind," Scot Pott, director of the Montrose Clinic's Deaf Outreach Program, said through a sign language interpreter. "We still have people who think you can get AIDS from mosquitos."

Pott said the Montrose Clinic had 67 grants rejected for its deaf outreach program because there were no statistics tracking AIDS in the deaf community at that time. The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta still has no data on the percentages of AIDS in the deaf community.

"The clinic in Houston seems to be the only program that has a formal statistics system," said Christine Buchholz, who works for AIDS Education Services in Los Angeles.

Ralph Lasher, executive director of the Montrose Clinic, said the simplest tasks for hearing patients become incredible obstacles for the deaf. Lasher recalled the problem one man had when he went to another clinic to get AIDS treatment. The deaf man waited all day in a waiting room after he missed his name being called for his appointment.

"It's not unusual for organizations to have Spanish speaking counselors but very few have someone who knows sign language," said Lasher. The Montrose program helps dozens of deaf AIDS patients obtain medical and social services as well as government assistance.

Pott was the first deaf person in Texas to be certified by the Texas Department of Health to train others in HIV counseling and testing.

## AIDS

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Elsewhere on World AIDS Day:

- Unfinished artwork was exhibited in museums in New York, Chicago and other cities to commemorate artists killed by AIDS.

- As at the White House, lights were dimmed or turned off Wednesday evening in buildings in major cities.

- Overseas, condoms were handed out on street corners from Berlin to Bulgaria to symbolize one way to slow the spread of the disease. In Paris,

activists used a crane to hoist a giant pink condom over the 75-foot obelisk in the Place de la Concorde.

At the hospital in Washington, Clinton voiced hope that one of the patients he met, 21-year-old Jenny Dorr, would live "to a ripe old age."

Another patient, Larry Singletary, 38, grabbed the president's hand and said he was hoping "for the best and hoping that you appropriate lots of money so research can be done."

The AIDS research budget has increased 21 percent this year to \$1.3 billion, and the administration and Congress have boosted funds for AIDS service

programs by 66 percent to \$570 million. On Tuesday Shalala announced formation of a task force of leaders from government, industry, academia and activist groups to speed the search for breakthrough drugs.

Clinton, in his speech, said "In a funny way, this whole disease is bringing out the best and the worst in America."

"It's exposing some of our prejudice in ways that are self-defeating, since every family and every child is not at risk," the president said.

"And yet, it's also showing us the courage, the self-determination, the incredible capacity of the American people to give and to love."

## Hostage

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Caruthers, 36, supervises the Troop Issue Support Agency, which supplies food and drinks for the four dining facilities at Fort Sam Houston.

Caruthers emerged from the ordeal unharmed.

No shots were fired. Military police and FBI agents spoke by telephone with the man beginning about 9 a.m.

An Army chaplain and psychiatrist also were on hand, and another co-worker also was involved in the negotiations at the request of the gunman, Simon said.

Meanwhile, a military special operations squad — armed with high-powered rifles, hatchets

and other weapons — crouched outside a door near where the man was holding the hostage.

"He seemed agitated to the point of just frustration, but to the point where we were concerned that he was going to start using violence at any time," Simon said.

Moseman surrendered after tossing out both his guns, according to Simon.

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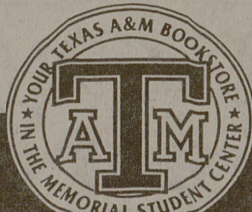
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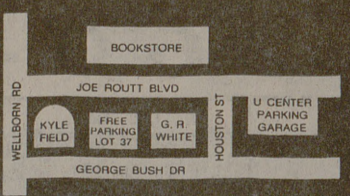
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