

Infants need test for AIDS, speaker says

By Katherine Arnold
THE BATTALION

Mandatory HIV/AIDS testing for pregnant women could be essential for early identification of health problems in infants, a speaker for the E.L. Miller Lecture Series said Wednesday night.

"Modern medicine has taught us that early identification in any health care situation is vital," Bill Viscovich, a New York attorney, said. "If an infected child is not identified, that child will not be treated."

Viscovich is a proponent of the "Baby AIDS Bill," a New York bill which would implement mandatory HIV/AIDS testing for all pregnant women in the state of New York.

The lecture series brought three guest speakers to Texas A&M to discuss AIDS testing policies.

Current law in Texas does not enforce mandatory AIDS testing for anyone. However, two of the visiting speakers were from New York, where mandatory testing is a major policy concern.

Elizabeth Cooper, a New York City attorney and member of the New York Task Force on Women and AIDS, said mandatory testing would be violating women's rights.

"Through mandatory testing, the state will interpose a message that the state is a better caretaker than the mother," she said.

Cooper said voluntary AIDS testing might be a better possibility because tests often give false positives, which could lead some women to wrongly terminate a pregnancy.

Many people are opposed to the state conducting the test because the information would then be available to employers and service

providers, Cooper said.

She also said mandatory HIV testing will result in many women avoiding prenatal care.

Cooper proposed that testing remain voluntary and confidential, thus ensuring that appropriate services be offered to mothers.

The mandatory testing policy would eliminate certain pretesting counseling services, which would ease the testing process.

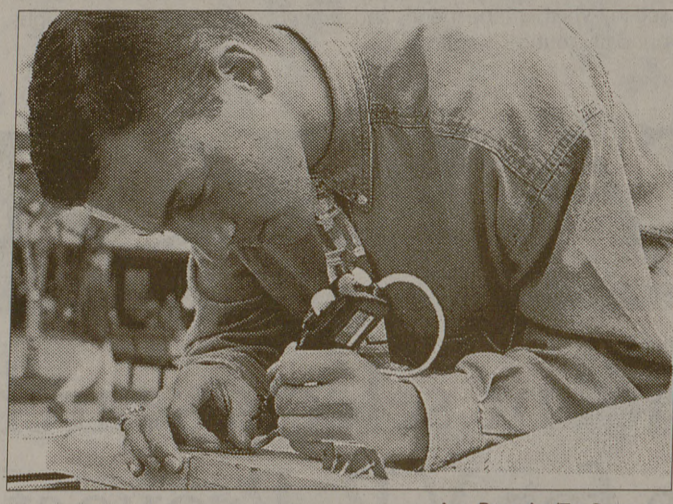
"Many women are scared off by the testing policy," Viscovich said. "AIDS tests are like no other testing. There are pages of forms that describe the possible discrimination and effects of a test that comes back positive."

This counseling is essential, Cooper said.

"It is not our desire to have anyone be ignorant about anything," she said.

Many people who test positive for HIV face discrimination in many aspects, John Scroggs, with the AIDS Services of Brazos Valley, said.

"There is personal discrimination from friends and neighbors, and even domestic violence," he said. "People sometimes face



Amy Browning/The Battalion

Helping build a home

Sophomore international business major Tommy Baril, of San Antonio, engraves a roofing nail that he bought for one dollar. He bought the nail as part of a fundraiser sponsored by the A&M chapter of the Habitat for Humanity.

tion from a study she helped conduct to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus from mothers to their unborn children.

Not all mothers infected with HIV transmit the virus to their babies, Hanson said. The rates

AIDS

"Modern medicine has taught us that early identification in any health situation is vital. If an (HIV) infected child is not identified, that child will not be treated."

- Bill Viscovich, New York attorney

losing their jobs and problems with insurance."

Celine Hanson, a Houston-area doctor, presented informa-

tion is filled. Dr. A. Benton Conaghaner had previously held the position on an interim basis but requested to be returned to his position as dean of the College of Business.

Dr. E. Dean Gage, a professor in the College of Business, vacated the provost position in August 1993 to serve as A&M interim president.

Gage said it takes a person who has great academic vision and leadership skills to succeed as provost.

"They have to be highly organized and effectively organize their time," Gage said. "They have to enjoy people and have excellent communication skills because a provost makes presentations to external and internal constituents."

"They need to help secure adequate funding to be able to offer the highest quality academics."

Gage said the provost is vitally important because whoever serves in this position has to recruit and retain the best possible faculty and staff.

"Students should have vital interest in who the next provost will be because he or she sets the tone of what happens in the classroom and research laboratory," Gage said.

"Basically, the provost determines the quality of education."

Provost Search

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an open individual with high integrity and common sense.

"This position is extremely important," Bowen said. "The provost will advise me on a variety of issues."

Bowen said students should take an interest in this search because he or she will need to have a concern for students.

"The provost will directly affect the education you will get at Texas A&M," Bowen said.

Alexander said she encouraged student participation in the search.

"We want active student input as the search progresses," Alexander said. "Students can nominate individuals from this campus or other campuses."

She said students should be interested in the search because the provost sets the life on campus.

"Students need to understand how much responsibility this person has," she said.

The major responsibilities of a provost are:

- to serve as acting president in the absence of the president,
- to oversee the development of budgets,
- to oversee planning for academic and physical facilities,
- to oversee the recruitment and admission of students and
- to review the selection, tenure and promotion of faculty.

Student leaders will have a chance to meet the final candidates when they visit campus for their interviews.

After the committee has evaluated and interviewed potential candidates, it will submit a short list of names to Bowen for final consideration.

The advisory committee will begin screening candidates on Feb. 1.

Bowen said he wants to name a provost on or before July 1.

Alexander said the search committee, which Bowen selected, is different from past search committees because it represents a wide range of people.

"This is the most diverse committee I know of," she said. "This is to Bowen's credit. He wanted to make sure every group was represented."

Dr. Mark Weichold, speaker of the Faculty Senate and a search committee member, agreed.

"The composition is a big departure from the past," he said. "It is more diverse in every definition of diverse."

Dr. J. Charles Lee is serving as interim executive vice president and provost until the posi-

Affirmative Action

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follow you."

Allen said people should be prepared for setbacks, but should never give up.

"Do not ever accept, consider or acknowledge failure," Allen said. "Just think that success simply has not yet been achieved."

David Butler, president of Kappa Alpha Psi, said the theme of Tuesday's meeting, "Affirmative Action: Why We Can't Wait,"

was taken from one of his books, "Why We Can't Wait."

Brooke Leslie, student president, said it is important for people to take Allen's message and nonviolent change seriously.

"I feel this is very important for a new and broader change in our hearts and go out and make a better world."

"Two wrongs don't make a right. Would it be to preserve their traditions at the sake of ours?"

"This would not be the first time a residence hall has been converted."

Fowler Hall was converted from a female hall to a male hall in 1991, but Carey Bresler, Leggett vice president, said the two situations are not comparable.

She said the former Fowler residents support the decision to move out and that they had balcony-style halls to move into. Leggett is the hall of its style and the residents do not want to move out.

"One hundred percent of our residents signed a petition saying they do not want to give up the hall to the men of Puryear and Law," Bresler said.

The RHA decision does not make the final decision, though.

The staff council, which is made up of Resident Life Staff members, decided Tuesday night not to support the conversion of Leggett.

The administration will now consider the proposal, along with the decisions of the RHA and staff council, and it will make a final decision.

Legett

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last spring that the University will not build any more residence halls.

Jake Carr, head of the Puryear/Law relocation committee, said that without the proposal, 402 spaces for males will be lost. With the proposal, 214 spaces for males will be lost and 188 spaces for females will be lost, he said.

Eddy Evans, Puryear's RHA delegate, said the Puryear and Law residents should be allowed to move as a group to maintain their spirit.

"If we can move as a group that has spirit now, it would be better than waiting until that group has disintegrated and you have to start over with freshmen," he said.

Kristi Shaw, Leggett's social chair, said that moving Leggett residents out of their hall so that the men from Law and Puryear can move in will make matters worse.

"This is a definite lose-lose situation," she said.

E-Walk

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According to the Texas A&M Archives, Elephant Walk originated when the members of the Class of '26 were freshmen.

"Elephant walk started when Piccolo Red, a senior, started walking down Military Walk playing Pop Goes the Weasel," Joe Fenton, curator of the Sam Houston Corps of Cadets Center, said. "A sousaphone joined in. Later down the road a bass drum joined. You could hear it all over campus, it was a distinctive sound."

In the past, underclassmen weren't allowed to even look at the elephants walking by.

"No where was the elephant to be shot, killed or gored," Fenton said. "The business of killing elephants has nothing to do with Elephant Walk."

This year, members of the Class of '95 and the Traditions Council have made efforts for the Elephant Walk to return to the style of Old Army days.

"I hope the day is a success and that we can say that we were the class that turned the tradition back to the way it's supposed to be," Kennedy said.

Some Aggies hope that spirit and tradition will return to Elephant Walk.

"I think it's time for individual Aggies, true Aggies, to tow the line, to say we're not going to lose the spirit of Aggieland," Fenton said.

Kennedy said Elephant Walk should be a respected tradition.

"Don't talk about death, or even say zip," Kennedy said. "It has nothing to do with dying. It's all about respect. Don't reflect on the seniors at all. Reflect on your own class."

Burke said he hopes the class council's work pays off.

"I think we've made great steps and I hope that today is the

respected tradition it uses.

The Class of '96 Class has activities planned to mark the "growing" of the class.

The Class of '96 will start at 1:36 p.m., 96 minutes after the beginning of the class.

The class will have an opportunity to see pictures with an elephant.

Kennedy said that the elephant will be at Duncan Field from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The juniors will march to the field after the seniors lead their walk. The class will hold a pull-out yell practice. Patterson will speak to the class. The day will end with a picture in the show on the field.

The Class of '96 Class will be collecting canned goods for a service project to be held along with the day's activities. The juniors will be tempted to feed 96 Aggies with the food they collected.

Kennedy said people don't experience traffic congestion in connection with Elephant Walk.

"Faculty and staff are aware of the possibility of traffic so they can allow extra time reaching their campus destinations," she said.

Correction

Additional information was excluded from an article appearing in Wednesday's edition of The Battalion.

Mel White said an October survey stated people who are homosexuals were 78 percent more apt than heterosexuals to molest children.

White said this survey was an example of misconceptions people had about homosexuals and that they were not inclined to molest children.

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