

News in Brief

Teen-ager accused of sexual assault

RICHMOND, Texas (AP) — A former West Virginia high school basketball player has pleaded innocent to charges he sexually assaulted a 6-year-old Texas girl. Jason Mark Allen, 18, of Sissonville, W.Va., was arraigned Monday in Fort Bend County District Court, said Diana Adams, an assistant district attorney. Allen is charged with aggravated sexual assault of a child. At the time of the April 1999 incident, he was living in Texas. Sheriff's officials in Kanawha County, W.Va., have said Allen also is a suspect in the sexual assault of a 12-year-old girl in Sissonville. Deputies were investigating that crime when Allen's name arose in connection with the Texas sexual assault, Kanawha County Sheriff Dave Tucker said.

Four killed in head-on collision

WALLIS (AP) — Four people, including three teen-agers, were killed in a head-on collision Monday night in Austin County. Leo Ervin Ohl Jr., 59, was headed the wrong way in the southbound lane of Texas 36, just south of Wallis, when his 1976 Ford collided with a 1986 Lincoln Town Car carrying four people, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety. Ohl, from Wallis, was killed along with three teens in the Lincoln: driver Amanda Majewski, 19; and passenger Tiffany Mewis, 19; and Cassidy Schoppe, 13. One person in the Lincoln, 12-year-old David Schoppe, suffered internal injuries and several broken bones. He was in critical condition Tuesday at Memorial Hermann Children's Hospital in Houston.

Houston attorney Clive Davis

(AP) — A smiling White House spokesman said Monday that heavy scrutiny Monday at the White House anniversary tribute to Clive Davis, Dionne Warwick's backstage. Davis, scheduled to sing a medley of his greatest names in the label's history for Arista founder Don Perren, was 19. The tribute will air May 15 on NBC. Davis, a much-discussed and a disjointed magazine, denied abusing drugs in the past. He was in the White House before the Oscars, Houston's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame director, and helped induct Davis. Davis supported security in Hawaii and of marijuana in Houston. Davis was in the White House to help police to arrive, the White House said. Davis left the White House and left the island. Davis has been charged in the incident.

HMO to allow doctors freedom

DALLAS (AP) — A legal settlement with Aetna U.S. Healthcare, described as a landmark in the industry, prohibits rewarding or penalizing doctors over whether they limit patients' health care.

The settlement contains no finding of fault, fines or penalties. And Aetna denies any wrongdoing in the agreement that ends its involvement in the 1998 lawsuit. Morales had sought to fine Aetna \$10,000 per violation for offering financial incentives for the medical care that physicians provide their patients.

"A lot of what is embodied in the agreement is not new business practices."

— Arthur Leibowitz
Aetna's Chief medical officer

Texas Attorney General John Comyn and Aetna today were to announce the settlement that could become a model for other health maintenance organizations. "The bottom line is this settlement places medical decision-making in the hands of doctors and their patients, and Texans can rest assured that doctors won't be penalized for elevating patient needs above HMOs," Comyn said.

He said in a draft of a letter to state lawmakers that Aetna has agreed to settle the lawsuit and take steps that will end any financial incentives to limit needed care to HMO members.

Comyn's predecessor, Dan Morales, sued Aetna and five other HMOs last year, accusing them of illegally compensating doctors who limited patients' medical care and penalizing those who didn't.

Aetna, under the settlement, is prohibited from fining doctors who exceed medical budgets or giving them bonuses for staying within limits. The state's largest HMO also will have to report if doctors' groups in its plan do give financial incentives.

The settlement was expected to quickly become a role model in other states, said Rocky Wilcox, chief counsel of the Texas Medical Association.

"It'll get all over the country real fast," said Wilcox.

chief medical officer, said. "This is partially the attorney general's desire to solicit other plans to fit within this business model."

Comyn said he would use the agreement as a model. If the other HMOs named in the lawsuit do not agree to the terms, the attorney general said, he will try them in Travis County state district court. The HMOs are Humana Health Plans of Texas, PacifiCare of Texas, NYLCare Health Plans of the Southwest and NYLCare Health Plans of the Gulf Coast.

Aetna said it decided to settle the lawsuit and accept state regulatory oversight because it will help restore the public's trust in managed care, said David Simon, the company's chief legal counselor.

The company has 960,000 Texans in its HMO and 2.4 million members enrolled in all of its health-care programs.

"We felt like if we could achieve this landmark settlement with Aetna, then Aetna's competitors would then know this would set the standard for them as well," said Comyn.

The Texas A&M Debate Society

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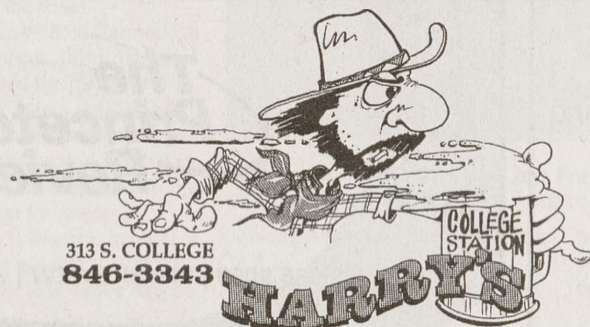
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