AIDS: What We All Need to Know

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(GREETINGS TO HOSTS...PRESIDENT ~~DOLORES~~ HARDISON ... PRESIDENT-ELECT ~~ARLEN~~ GUNDERMAN ... ~~SPECIAL GUESTS, ETC.~~)

I WANT TO THANK SAM SAVA, YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AT YOUR ANNUAL MEETING.

THIS, BY THE WAY, IS MY FIRST FULL DAY BACK IN THE UNITED STATES, AFTER SPENDING 10 DAYS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA LOOKING AT THEIR HEALTH FACILITIES AND MEETING WITH THEIR TOP PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS.

I HAVEN'T SORTED OUT ALL MY IMPRESSIONS AS YET, AND THAT'S NOT WHAT I'VE COME TO TALK ABOUT ANYWAY. BUT I DO WANT TO ADVISE YOU THAT THERE ARE -- LITERALLY -- MILLIONS OF EDUCATORS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC WHO SHARE WITH YOU A LOVE FOR CHILDREN AND A DEEP AND ABIDING WISH THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO GROW UP -- SMART AND HEALTHY -- IN A PEACEFUL WORLD.

AND WE CAN ALL SAY "AMEN" TO THAT.

I DON'T MEAN TO IMPLY, HOWEVER, THAT A WORLD AT PEACE IS -- THEREFORE -- A SAFE WORLD FOR EVERYONE. MORE CHILDREN, THE WORLD OVER, DIE OF DISEASE AND MALNUTRITION EACH YEAR THAN HAVE EVER DIED OF WAR.

AND TODAY, WITH THE PANDEMIC OF AIDS PRESENT IN VIRTUALLY EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, THE FIGHT FOR LIFE AND HEALTH IS AS DIFFICULT AS EVER.

AND FOR SOME ... MORE DIFFICULT THAN EVER.

WE'VE GOT TO TALK ABOUT AIDS, BECAUSE THIS DISEASE IS JUST AS MUCH A THREAT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AS IT IS TO THE PEOPLE OF CHINA, INDIA, NIGERIA, OR BRAZIL. AND IN SOME RESPECTS, EVEN MORE SO.

THIS DISEASE IS POSING SOME VERY SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR US ... EDUCATIONAL, MORAL, ETHICAL, AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS. MOST OF YOU WILL BE FACING THEM, AS LEADERS BOTH IN EDUCATION AND IN CIVIC AFFAIRS. BUT I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF A FAIR NUMBER OF YOU ARE ALREADY STANDING FACE-TO-FACE WITH MANY OF THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS RAISED BY THIS EPIDEMIC.

AND WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THEM VERY SERIOUSLY BECAUSE I BELIEVE AIDS IS POTENTIALLY ONE OF THE WORST INFECTIOUS DISEASES EVER TO HIT THE HUMAN RACE.

YES, I SAID "POTENTIALLY" BECAUSE I HOPE THAT WE'LL SOMEHOW ESCAPE THE FULL FORCE OF THE EPIDEMIC, THANKS TO SCIENCE AND MEDICINE ... AND THANKS ALSO TO THE NATIVE COMMON SENSE OF MOST PEOPLE, INCLUDING -- AND ESPECIALLY -- THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I'M BANKING ON THE IDEA THAT AMERICANS -- AND INDEED PEOPLE EVERYWHERE ON THIS PLANET -- WILL HAVE THE GOOD SENSE TO LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT AIDS AND WILL, THEREFORE, BEHAVE THEMSELVES IN WAYS THAT PREVENT THE SPREAD OF AIDS.

BUT JUST WHAT ARE THE FACTS AT THIS TIME? WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT THIS DISEASE IN ORDER TO PROTECT YOURSELF ... YOUR FAMILY ... YOUR LOVED ONES ... AND YOUR SCHOOL.

THE FIRST THING TO KNOW -- AND I SAY THIS, DESPITE MY OPTIMISM OF A MOMENT AGO -- IS THAT THE AIDS VIRUS IS SPREADING. WE KNOW THIS FROM THE REPORTS COMING IN TO THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE EVERY WEEK FROM EVERY STATE AND TERRITORIAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

FOR EXAMPLE, FROM MARCH 1986 TO MARCH OF '87, WE LOGGED IN 15,024 NEW CASES OF AIDS. BUT OVER THE MOST RECENT 12-MONTH PERIOD -- FROM MARCH '87 TO MARCH '88 -- WE LOGGED IN ALMOST 24,000 NEW CASES.

YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT OUR FIRST CLUE ABOUT THIS DISEASE APPEARED BACK IN JUNE 1981, WITH A REPORT OF 5 CASES OF A RARE TYPE OF PNEUMONIA FOUND AMONG "OTHERWISE HEALTHY HOMOSEXUAL MALES" IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

SINCE THOSE FIRST 5 CASES WERE RECORDED, LOS ANGELES HAS REPORTED ANOTHER 4,600 CASES ... AND THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE HAS TURNED UP MORE THAN 57,000 CASES OF AIDS.

FROM 5 CASES TO 57,000 CASES IN LESS THAN 7 YEARS ... YOU MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY ANY DISEASE THAT EXPLODES UPON A NATION WITH SUCH SPEED AND SUCH SEVERITY.

BUT THE AIDS EPIDEMIC IS MORE THAN JUST AN EXERCISE IN NUMBERS. THE FIRST REPORTS MAY HAVE COME FROM LOS ANGELES, BUT TODAY EVERY STATE AND TERRITORY HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY THIS EPIDEMIC.

I GRANT YOU THAT HALF OF ALL CASES REPORTED SO FAR HAVE BEEN IN EITHER NEW YORK OR CALIFORNIA. BUT THE REST OF US CAN'T BE SMUG ABOUT THAT INFORMATION.

INDIANA, OUT IN THE HEARTLAND OF AMERICA, HAS HAD 295 CASES SO FAR ... KANSAS HAS HAD 133 ... MAINE, 70 CASES ... NORTH DAKOTA, 6 ... AND EVEN GUAM HAS HAD 4 CASES SO FAR.

AND 20 CITIES IN 14 STATES HAVE EACH REPORTED OVER 500 CASES OF AIDS SINCE 1981.

SO THIS EPIDEMIC IS GROWING NUMERICALLY AND SPREADING GEOGRAPHICALLY.

HOWEVER, THE EXPANSION OF THE AIDS EPIDEMIC IS ONLY PART OF THE STORY. ANOTHER PART IS EVEN MORE GRIM.

AIDS IS VIRTUALLY 100 PERCENT FATAL. OF THOSE 57,000 PERSONS WHO WERE REPORTED AS HAVING AIDS SO FAR, 32,000 HAVE DIED. THAT'S AN OVERALL MORTALITY RATE OF 56 PERCENT.

BUT WAIT A MINUTE. OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAD AIDS IN 1981, SOME 92 PERCENT HAVE ALREADY DIED.

OF THOSE IN 1982, CLOSE TO 90 PERCENT HAVE DIED.

AND ALMOST A THIRD OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE REPORTED WITH AIDS JUST LAST YEAR HAVE ALREADY DIED.

WE DO NOT KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS DISEASE. BUT ONE THING WE CAN SAY WITH SOME ASSURANCE:

IF YOU HAVE AIDS, YOUR CHANCES OF SURVIVING THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS ARE NOT VERY GOOD. BUT YOUR CHANCES OF SURVIVING ANY LONGER THAN THAT ARE ALMOST NIL.

OF COURSE, WE HAVE A DRUG CALLED A.Z.T. WHICH SEEMS ABLE TO PROLONG THE LIVES OF MANY PERSONS WITH AIDS. AND SEVERAL OTHER DRUGS WITH THE SAME KIND OF PROMISE ARE IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL PIPELINE.

BUT -- IF AND WHEN THEY WORK -- THESE DRUGS WILL ONLY PROLONG A PERSON'S LIFE FOR A FEW MONTHS ... MAYBE A YEAR OR SO. THEY DO NOT CURE YOU OF AIDS ... NOR OF ANY CONDITION <u>BROUGHT ON</u> BY AIDS.

THE HARD TRUTH IS THAT WE HAVE NO DRUG ... NO VACCINE ... NO "MAGIC BULLET" OF ANY KIND THAT PREVENTS AIDS OR STOPS IT IN ITS TRACKS.

NO DOUBT YOU'VE READ NEWS REPORTS ABOUT SOME VACCINE TESTING THAT'S JUST GETTING UNDERWAY. IT'S TRUE ... WE HAVE ALLOWED SOME VACCINE TESTING TO BEGIN.

BUT THESE ARE ONLY THE VERY FIRST STEPS IN VACCINE DEVELOPMENT. THE REMAINDER OF THE PROCESS WILL BE VERY LONG -- STRETCHING TO THE END OF THIS CENTURY AT THE LEAST. AND THAT'S PUTTING THE BEST FACE ON IT.

SO I MUST SAY THAT IF YOU -- OR ANY OF YOUR TEACHERS OR ANY PARENTS -- MINIMIZE THE SITUATION WE'RE IN, EXPECTING A CURE TO BE DISCOVERED ANY DAY NOW ... YOU -- AND THEY -- ARE SADLY MISTAKEN.

"ANY DAY" COULD BE 12 TO 15 YEARS AWAY.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AIDS?

HOW THE BUG REALLY OPERATES, FOR ONE THING. AT LEAST, AS FAR AS WE UNDERSTAND IT. REMEMBER, THE AIDS VIRUS IS STILL A MYSTERY, SO, WHILE WE KNOW QUITE A BIT ABOUT IT, AIDS COULD STILL SURPRISE US LATER ON.

ONCE IT INVADES THE HUMAN BODY, THE AIDS VIRUS -- TECHNICALLY, THE HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS, OR H.I.V. -- GOES AFTER TWO TARGETS.

ONE TARGET IS THE BRAIN AND THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. HERE, THE AIDS VIRUS ITSELF APPARENTLY BRINGS ON A DETERIORATION OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. HENCE, TO THE ALREADY LONG LIST OF DISEASES AND CONDITIONS CAUSED BY AIDS, WE'VE HAD TO ADD DEMENTIA.

BUT THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM IS NOT WHERE THE AIDS VIRUS HAS BEEN DOING ITS WORST DAMAGE FOR THE PAST 6 YEARS.

THE AIDS VIRUS MOST COMMONLY FEEDS ON -- AND DESTROYS -- ITS OTHER TARGET: THOSE WHITE BLOOD CELLS THAT ARE THE BASIS OF OUR HUMAN IMMUNE SYSTEM.

ONCE THE VIRUS FINDS THAT TARGET AND ATTACKS, THE PERSON WITH THE VIRUS BECOMES AN EASY MARK FOR THE NEXT INFECTIOUS DISEASE OR CANCER THAT COMES ALONG.

AND THOSE DISEASES ARE WHAT ATTACK AND KILL AIDS PATIENTS ... DISEASES SUCH AS PNEUMOCYSTIS CARINII PNEUMONIA, KAPOSI'S SARCOMA, CYTOMEGALOVIRAL INFECTIONS, "VALLEY FEVER" OR PROGRESSIVE COCCIDIOMYCOSIS, HISTOPLASMOSIS, ATYPICAL TUBERCULOSIS, CANDIDIASIS OF THE ESOPHAGUS AND THE RESPIRATORY TRACT, ULCERATIVE HERPES, AND SO ON.

SINCE THE AIDS VIRUS FEEDS ON WHITE BLOOD CELLS, THE VIRUS APPEARS WHERE THERE ARE HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF SUCH CELLS. AND THOSE CELLS ARE FOUND MAINLY IN TWO BODY FLUIDS -- BLOOD AND SEMEN -- BUT ALSO APPEAR IN VAGINAL FLUIDS.

THAT INFORMATION ALSO HELPS US UNDERSTAND HOW THE AIDS VIRUS IS SPREAD FORM PERSON TO PERSON:

THIS DISEASE IS SPREAD WHEN ANY AIDS-INFECTED BLOOD AND/OR SEMEN FROM ONE PERSON ENTERS INTO ANOTHER PERSON'S BODY AND IS ABSORBED INTO HIS OR HER BLOODSTREAM.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE TRANSMISSION OF THE AIDS VIRUS DOESN'T HAPPEN IN ANY CASUAL WAY. YOU TRANSMIT -- OR CATCH -- AIDS ONLY IF YOU DO SOMETHING THAT WILL PASS AIDS-INFECTED BLOOD AND/OR SEMEN BETWEEN YOU AND SOMEONE ELSE.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS TAKES PLACE IN FOUR DIFFERENT WAYS.

ONE WAY WAS THROUGH BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS. MOST CHILDREN WITH AIDS OR CARRYING THE VIRUS RECEIVED IT THROUGH A CONTAMINATED BLOOD TRANSFUSION OR THROUGH CONTAMINATED CLOTTING FACTORS, MADE FROM BLOOD, THAT ARE USED FOR THE TREATMENT OF HEMOPHILIA. SO, ONE WAY WAS THROUGH BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS.

I SAY "WAS" BECAUSE IN 1985 WE DEVELOPED A VERY GOOD BLOOD TEST THAT DETECTS THE PRESENCE OF ANTIBODIES TO THE AIDS VIRUS IN A SAMPLE OF A PERSON'S BLOOD.

THAT SOUNDS SORT OF ROUNDABOUT -- AND IT IS, BECAUSE, REMEMBER, THERE'S STILL MORE ABOUT THE AIDS VIRUS THAT WE DON'T KNOW THEN ~~WHAT~~ WE DO KNOW.

THEREFORE, WE HAVE TO LOOK FOR A CONCENTRATION OF ANTIBODIES TO THE AIDS VIRUS TO TELL US THAT THE VIRUS ITSELF IS PRESENT. IT'S LIKE KNOWING THERE'S A KILLER NEARBY BECAUSE YOU SEE HIS SHADOW ON THE WALL.

IN ANY CASE, RIGHT NOW, THANKS TO TWO TESTS -- A SCREENING TEST AND A CONFIRMATION TEST -- OUR BLOOD SUPPLY IS JUST ABOUT AS SAFE AS WE CAN MAKE IT. AND THAT GOES FOR CLOTTING FACTORS AS WELL.

THE ODDS TODAY OF GETTING A CONTAMINATED UNIT OF TRANSFUSED BLOOD ARE BETWEEN 1 IN 40,000 AND 1 IN 250,000. COMPARE THOSE ODDS WITH, SAY, DEATH ON THE HIGHWAY: THAT'S 1 IN 5,900. OR BEING KILLED PLAYING SOCCER: YOUR CHANCES ARE 1 IN 25,000 FOR THAT.

SO EVEN THE VERY CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF 1 CHANCE IN 40,000 THAT YOU'LL GET A TRANSFUSION OF AIDS-CONTAMINATED BLOOD MEANS -- IN THE REAL WORLD -- THAT SUCH A POSSIBILITY IS EXTREMELY REMOTE. AND THAT WAS SOMETHING WE COULDN'T DECLARE JUST A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO.

THAT LEAVES THREE WAYS TO CATCH AIDS. AND THESE ARE MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT FOR SOCIETY TODAY.

THE MOST COMMON OF THESE THREE IS THROUGH SEXUAL INTERCOURSE. A MAN WITH AIDS CAN PASS THE VIRUS TO HIS SEXUAL PARTNER THROUGH HIS SEMEN. UNFORTUNATELY, THE PROCESS CAN BE THAT SIMPLE. AND, AGAIN UNFORTUNATELY, THE VIRUS CAN BE PASSED THE OTHER WAY, TOO: FEMALE-TO-MALE.

AS A RESULT, ~~A GREAT MANY~~ PROSTITUTES HAVE CONTRACTED AIDS BY HAVING VAGINAL INTERCOURSE WITH A MAN INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS.

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THEY, IN TURN, HAVE PASSED THE VIRUS ON TO OTHERS. AS A RESULT, I WOULD GUESS THAT A FEW UNSUSPECTING WIVES AND SWEETHEARTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE VIRUS AS WELL.

BUT CERTAIN SEX PRACTICES NOT ONLY PRODUCE SEMEN, THEY ALSO CAUSE BLEEDING. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE DURING ANAL INTERCOURSE, WHEN TISSUES TEND TO BE RUPTURED, BLEEDING OCCURS, AND A MAN'S AIDS-INFECTED SEMEN THEN DIRECTLY ENTERS HIS PARTNER'S BLOODSTREAM.

ANAL INTERCOURSE IS MOST OFTEN PRACTICED BY HOMOSEXUALS AND BISEXUAL MALES. TODAY, LOOKING BACK TO 1981, IT'S NO LONGER SURPRISING THAT THOSE FIRST 5 CASES OF AIDS INVOLVED "OTHERWISE HEALTHY HOMOSEXUALS."

INDEED, OVER THE PAST 7 YEARS, 2 OUT OF EVERY 3 PERSONS WITH AIDS HAVE BEEN EITHER HOMOSEXUALS OR BISEXUAL MALES.

BUT PLEASE REMEMBER THAT HOMOSEXUALITY ... BY ITSELF ... DOES NOT CAUSE AIDS, JUST AS HETEROSEXUALITY ... BY ITSELF ...DOES NOT CAUSE SYPHILIS.

THERE ARE, AFTER ALL, AN ESTIMATED 12 MILLION HOMOSEXUALS IN THE U.S. POPULATION AND IT IS APPEARS THAT MOST OF THEM -- LIKE MOST AMERICANS IN GENERAL -- ARE MONOGAMOUS ... THEY ARE NOT SEXUALLY PROMISCUOUS ... AND THEY DO NOT ENGAGE IN THE ROUGHER KINDS OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.

AND SO ... THOSE HOMOSEXUALS DO NOT HAVE AIDS AND THEY'LL PROBABLY NEVER GET IT.

IN FACT, THEY'RE JUST AS FRIGHTENED OF THE DISEASE AS THE REST OF US ARE.

WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO IS THIS: WE'RE FIGHTING A DEADLY DISEASE ... WE'RE NOT FIGHTING THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE IT ... OR THE PEOPLE WHO WE THINK MIGHT HAVE IT.

THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH PRINCIPLE IN THIS COUNTRY. AMERICA HAS TAKEN ON SOME PRETTY DIFFICULT DISEASES OVER THE YEARS -- SMALLPOX, POLIO, LEPROSY, MEASLES, SYPHILIS -- BUT IN NOT ONE OF THOSE CASES DID WE ATTACK THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SICK ... JUST THE SICKNESS ITSELF.

AND I CAN ASSURE YOU, AS YOUR SURGEON GENERAL, WE'RE NOT GOING TO CHANGE NOW ... AIDS OR NO AIDS.

I SAID THERE WERE FOUR WAYS TO GET AIDS. ONE WAS THROUGH TRANSFUSED BLOOD, WHICH IS NO LONGER A PROBLEM. THE SECOND WAY IS THROUGH SEXUAL INTERCOURSE ... ESPECIALLY -- BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY -- ANAL INTERCOURSE.

AND NOW THE THIRD WAY IS TO SHARE NEEDLES AND SYRINGES ALREADY USED BY AN AIDS-INFECTED DRUG ADDICT.

I'M TOLD THAT THIS IS A VERY COMMON PRACTICE AMONG INTRAVENOUS DRUG ABUSERS ... IT'S AN EXPRESSION OF CAMARADERIE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, AND DOESN'T SEEM RELATED TO THE COST OR AVAILABILITY OF DRUG-PARAPHERNALIA.

BUT EXACTLY HOW IS THE VIRUS TRANSMITTED BY THIS MEANS? AGAIN, IT'S UNFORTUNATELY QUITE SIMPLE.

AFTER A PERSON INJECTS THE DRUG INTO HIS OR HER VEIN, A TINY DROP OF BLOOD IS OFTEN LEFT BEHIND IN THE NEEDLE OR EVEN FURTHER UP, IN THE SYRINGE ITSELF.

IF THE USER IS INFECTED WITH AIDS, SOME OF THAT VIRUS WILL BE IN THAT DROP OF BLOOD, ALSO. AND FROM WHAT WE CAN GATHER SO FAR, IT APPEARS THAT THE AIDS VIRUS CAN REMAIN ALIVE IN SUCH A SITUATION FOR SEVERAL HOURS AT THE VERY LEAST ... AND POSSIBLY A DAY OR TWO AT THE MOST.

THE NEXT PERSON USING THAT NEEDLE AND SYRINGE TO "SHOOT UP" WILL GET THAT DROP OF BLOOD ALONG WITH HIS OR HER "FIX." AND THE AIDS VIRUS WILL BE RIGHT THERE WITH IT. Q.E.D.

AT THE LAST COUNT, 1 OUT OF EVERY 4 PERSONS WITH AIDS -- OVER 14,000 PEOPLE SO FAR -- HAS BEEN AN INTRAVENOUS DRUG ABUSER.

THE FOURTH AND FINAL WAY TO GET AIDS IS TO BE BORN OF A MOTHER WHO HAS AIDS. SO FAR, OVER 660 CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE BEEN BORN WITH AIDS.

IN THOSE CASES, THE AIDS VIRUS -- ALREADY IN THE MOTHER'S BLOODSTREAM -- SIMPLY MIGRATES INTO THE CHILD'S BLOODSTREAM SOMETIME DURING PREGNANCY OR DURING CHILDBIRTH ITSELF.

THOSE, THEN, ARE THE FOUR WAYS BY WHICH A PERSON CAN BECOME INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS. NOTICE, PLEASE, THAT NONE OF THEM INVOLVES A CASUAL ACT ON ANYONE'S PART.

A PERSON CAN SHARE SOMEONE ELSE'S WATER GLASS, BATH TOWEL, TOILET SEAT, CAFETERIA UTENSILS, SWEATSHIRT, PEN, PENCILS, AND COMPUTER KEYBOARD ... AND NOT GET AIDS.

YOU MIGHT CATCH A COLD. OR YOU MIGHT CATCH THE FLU.

BUT YOU WON'T CATCH AIDS.

OBVIOUSLY, FROM A PUBLIC HEALTH POINT OF VIEW, THERE IS NO REASON TO EXCLUDE FROM SCHOOL ANY STUDENT OR TEACHER WITH AIDS.

YOU MAY DO IT FOR OTHER REASONS ... REASONS WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE FAIR TO THE PEOPLE INVOLVED ... BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE PUBLIC HEALTH REASONS.

SO FAR, I'VE TALKED ABOUT THE VIRUS AND HOW IT ATTACKS THE HUMAN NEUROLOGICAL AND IMMUNE SYSTEMS. BUT WE ARE NOT TOTALLY DEFENSELESS AGAINST THE AIDS VIRUS.

WE MAY LACK A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE VACCINE AGAINST AIDS, BUT A FEW OTHER DEFENSES ARE AVAILABLE.

ONE OBVIOUS DEFENSE IS SIMPLY TO STAY AWAY FROM INTRAVENOUS DRUG ABUSE. I DON'T THINK THAT REQUIRES ANY MORE COMMENT FROM ME, PARTICULARLY BEFORE THIS AUDIENCE OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ON THE FRONT-LINE FIGHTING DRUG ABUSE IN OUR COUNTRY YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT.

SO LET ME MOVE ON TO THE NEXT KIND OF DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR, WHICH INVOLVES AN UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN SEXUALITY.

FIRST, I WILL CONFESS THAT I AM PROFOUNDLY SADDENED BY THE IDEA THAT WE MUST EXPLAIN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AND HUMAN SEXUALITY TO A NEW GENERATION OF GIRLS AND BOYS -- SO THAT THEY MAY AVOID CONTRACTING A FATAL DISEASE.

AND YET ... WE MUST.

AND OUR FIRST RECOMMENDATION OUGHT TO BE ABSTINENCE FROM SEX.

I GRANT THAT SEXUAL ABSTINENCE MAY NOT WORK FOR EVERYONE. IF IT DID, THAT WOULD BE THE END OF THE HUMAN RACE.

BUT SEXUAL ABSTINENCE IS A VERY GOOD IDEA FOR YOUNGSTERS OF SCHOOL AGE. TODAY -- IN THE PRESENCE OF THE DEADLY AIDS EPIDEMIC -- I THINK WE, AS ADULTS, MUST STEP FORWARD AND HELP OUR CHILDREN ADDRESS THE PHENOMENON OF THEIR OWN SEXUALITY IN A CARING, DEVELOPMENTAL WAY.

AND OUR MESSAGE OUGHT TO INCLUDE THE WISDOM OF CHOOSING TO BE SEXUALLY ABSTINENT, WHILE STILL IN SCHOOL.

FOR THE REST OF US ... ME ... YOU ... YOUR FACULTY ... ABSTINENCE MAY NOT BE THE BEHAVIOR OF CHOICE. WHAT THEN?

THEN THE NEXT BEST THING IS MONOGAMY ... ONE PERSON, ONE MATE: FIND SOMEONE TO WHOM YOU CAN GIVE YOUR LOVE AND RESPECT AND TRUST ... SOMEHOW WHO WILL GIVE THE SAME IN RETURN ... AND STAY WITH THAT PERSON FOREVER.

SUCH A MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP IS NOT LIKELY TO BE INFECTED AND CONSUMED BY AIDS ... OR BY ANY OTHER DISEASE EITHER.

OF COURSE, A NUMBER OF PEOPLE ARE MONOGAMOUS -- BUT <u>IN SEQUENCE:</u> THAT IS, THROUGH DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE, FOR EXAMPLE, AN INDIVIDUAL MAY HAVE ONE ... TWO ... OR MORE <u>MONOGAMOUS</u> PARTNERS DURING HIS OR HER ADULT LIFETIME.

AND THEN THERE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO, FOR WHATEVER REASONS, DO NOT HAVE A LOVING, MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP -- AND PERHAPS NEVER WILL HAVE. YET, THEY, TOO, MAY WANT TO EXPRESS THEIR OWN SEXUALITY FROM TIME TO TIME AND THAT'S A NORMAL ENOUGH ~~THING TO DO.~~ DESIRE. WHAT OF THESE INDIVIDUALS?

FOR THEM WE RECOMMEND THAT THEY PROTECT THEMSELVES. AND, AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE ONLY EFFECTIVE PROTECTION AVAILABLE IS THE LATEX CONDOM.

THE CONDOM IS NOT ONE-HUNDRED-PERCENT-PERFECT. I'VE NEVER CLAIMED THAT IT WAS. HOWEVER, WHEN IT IS USED CORRECTLY -- THAT IS, WHEN THE LATEX CONDOM IS WORN FROM START TO FINISH DURING SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, WITH A LITTLE SPERMICIDE ADDED ON THE TIP AND ON THE SIDES -- IT DOES PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE BARRIER AGAINST THE TRANSMISSION OF THE AIDS VIRUS. CONDOMS, AS CADETS, ARE MORE RELIABLE THAN THE PEOPLE WHO USE THEM.

ABSTINENCE ... MONOGAMY ... AND THE USE OF THE LATEX CONDOM SEEM TO BE OUR BEST DEFENSES AGAINST THE TRANSMISSION OF THE AIDS VIRUS THROUGH SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.

THAT'S A DIFFICULT MESSAGE TO DELIVER TO ADULTS. IT'S EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO DELIVER TO YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL.

BUT IT'S A LIFE-SAVING MESSAGE AND, THEREFORE, WE ARE DUTY-BOUND TO DELIVER IT.

AS I'VE PRESENTED IT SO FAR, THE MESSAGE DOES HAVE A NASTY CLINICAL SIDE TO IT. BUT A THOUGHTFUL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DEALING WITH SEXUALITY AND AIDS PREVENTION SHOULD ALSO TOUCH UPON SOME NON-CLINICAL CONCEPTS, SUCH AS SEX WITH RESPONSIBILITY ... SEX WITH CARING ... SEX WITH JUSTICE ... AND SEX WITH SELF-RESPECT AND WITH MUTUAL RESPECT.

FROM A PUBLIC HEALTH POINT OF VIEW, THEN, THIS IS ALL THERE IS TO A BASIC INFORMATION PACKAGE CONCERNING AIDS: WHAT IT IS, HOW IT'S TRANSMITTED, AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST IT.

I BELIEVE THAT WE ADULTS ARE MORALLY OBLIGATED TO TELL YOUNG PEOPLE THE FACTS ABOUT AIDS. BUT THOSE FACTS DO NOT EXIST IN A VACUUM. YES, WE NEED TO TELL YOUNG PEOPLE THE FACTS ABOUT AIDS ... BUT WE MUST ALSO TELL THEM THE FACTS ABOUT HUMAN DECENCY AND LOVE AND MUTUAL RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY.

THAT'S THE KIND OF ADULT THAT OUR SOCIETY NEEDS TODAY. AND TOMORROW ... EVEN MORE SO.

WITH YOUR HELP -- AND WITH THE HELP OF YOUR SCHOOLS -- WE WILL HAVE THOSE ADULTS TOMORROW ... ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN AMERICA.

THANK YOU.

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