

AIDS Lecture March 26, 1987cover

Address

By

C. Everett Koop, MD, ScD

Surgeon General

Of the

U.S. Public Health Service and

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Presented to the Joint Session of the Legislature

Of the State of Texas

Austin, Texas

March 26, 1987

This presentation was given two days after the last lecture on AIDS and essentially was what I had said to the Joint Session of the Legislature in the state of California. If this lecture had been given a year later, I would have included some things that do not appear here, the reason being is that had not yet made themselves evident. I have mentioned earlier elsewhere that the fact that I was talking about sex education in my Surgeon General's Report on AIDS, caused as much furor as my use of the words penis, vagina, rectum, and condom. Apparently, Texas of all states was more upset than others. I had more threats upon my life from the state of Texas than I had from the rest of the states in the Union put together. Frequently, if the threat was explicit it had to do with the fact that I was leading the children of America down the garden path to immorality.

Before the Legislature I acknowledged the relationship that existed at the time between the Public Health Service and the local and state public health offices in Texas, and acknowledged particularly the special role played by their Commissioner of Health, Dr. Robert Bernstein, with whom I had many contacts during the early years of the AIDS epidemic. I acknowledged that Texans were among the first of our citizens back in 1980 and 81 to be identified as being the victims of AIDS. They were also among the first in the country to die of AIDS. In addition to just speaking about the economics of AIDS, I made it clear that AIDS would force us to draw evermore heavily upon the country's social and political capital as well as upon its medical and financial capital.

The Commissioner of Health of Texas, already mentioned, had done an excellent job of identifying the key issues presented by this disease and by sounding the alert without fear and hysteria. I also added to those comments that good Texan common sense had been used. I would never have said that a year later, because of the aforementioned threats on my life for talking about sex education of youngsters.

One interesting fact about the mortality in Texas: nationally, over half of the patients with the reported disease had died, whereas in Texas with 2,000 cases thus far, two-thirds of them were dead. Predictions were that Texas would play host to 16,000 cases by 1991.

All of the new material that I had added to my lecture for presentation to the National Press Club was included in this lecture to the Texas State Legislature. In view of my remarks about death threats in Texas, I reviewed very carefully what I had said about sex education in reference to AIDS and found it totally in line with what I had said elsewhere so, it must be that Texans were different rather than that my emphasis was overstated. I really don't think I could have said it better.

Abstinence
AIDS education
Association State & Territorial Health Officials
Care of terminally ill patients with AIDS
Condoms
Differences in the mortality of AIDS in Texas & Elsewhere
Effect of AIDS on our medical & financial capital
Effect of AIDS on the country's social & political capital
History of the development of knowledge of the AIDS virus
Homosexual & bisexual men
Mutually faithful monogamy
Organ recitals
Parents as sex educators
Partition of AIDS among Hispanic & Afro-Americans
Partition of AIDS in infants among Hispanics & Afro-Americans
Partnership between the Public Health Service & Public Health Officers in Texas
Role of insurance in AIDS
Science & morality as allies
Sex education
Texans among the first victims of AIDS

Dr. Robert Bernstein
Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention
Lee Iacocca
National Coalition of Black & Lesbian Gays
National Education Association
National PTA
Synagogue Council of America
Surgeon General's Report on AIDS
Texas Task Force on AIDS
Washington Business Group on Health