

ORIGINAL

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

DECEMBER 12, 1988

(GREETINGS TO HOSTS, GUESTS, FRIENDS, ETC.)

I APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO THE WASHINGTON CHAPTER OF THE A.S.P.A. YOU ARE THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE GOVERNMENT WORK, YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT ... AND YOU KEEP IT HONEST ... AND YOU KEEP IT FAIR.

AND THAT'S WHAT OUR GOVERNMENT IS ... BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL ARE. THEY'RE HONEST ... AND THEY'RE FAIR.

UNFORTUNATELY, ROUTINE DAY-TO-DAY HONESTY AND FAIR PLAY  
WON'T MAKE A HEADLINE OR A "SOUND BITE" ON THE EVENING T.V. NEWS.  
INSTEAD DISHONESTY AND UNFAIRNESS WILL GET THE HEADLINES.

AND I GUESS, FOR OUR KIND OF OPEN DEMOCRACY, THAT'S AS IT  
SHOULD BE. WRONGDOERS SHOULD BE EXPOSED AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
SHOULD GET A LOOK AT THEM AND KNOW THEIR NAMES.

AS RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATORS AND DECISION-MAKERS IN  
GOVERNMENT, WE SHOULD BE ON OUR GUARD, BECAUSE SOME VERY STRONG  
FORCES ARE LINED UP AGAINST US.

"GREED" IS ONE ... EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT GREED, WHICH IS THE FIRST DEADLY SIN TO MAKE THE COVER OF NEWSWEEK.

BUT THERE'S MORE THAN GREED OUT THERE. THERE'S ALSO PREJUDICE AND INTOLERANCE ... INATTENTION ... BOREDOM AND IGNORANCE ... AND INDOLENCE.

THEY ARE AMONG THE BASER INSTINCTS OF THE HUMAN RACE, I'M SORRY TO SAY. I WISH IT WERE NOT SO. BUT IT'S TRUE.

BUT THE HUMAN RACE HAS ANOTHER AND A MUCH GRANDER INSTINCT. IT'S THE INSTINCT TO RECOVER AND TO SURVIVE ... TO GET UP AND KEEP GOING ... THE INSTINCT FOR RENEWAL ... THE INSTINCT FOR SELF-PRESERVATION AND THE NEED TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT ONE'S SELF.

AND, IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT FOR A MOMENT, YOU MIGHT AGREE WITH ME THAT A GREAT DEAL OF OUR WORK IN GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE IN THE SERVICE OF THIS PARTICULAR HUMAN INSTINCT.

IT'S AN OPTIMISTIC INSTINCT, AND I THINK GOVERNMENT IS AT ITS BEST, WHEN IT SUPPORTS AND NOURISHES THIS MOST HOPEFUL OF HUMANITY'S MANY ATTRIBUTES: OUR BASIC INSTINCT TO WANT TO LIVE A DECENT LIFE.

BUT THIS OBSERVATION ISN'T LIMITED TO GOVERNMENT. I THINK A GOOD ADMINISTRATOR ANYWHERE WILL RESPECT THIS BASIC INSTINCT AND WILL SUPPORT IT AND NURTURE IT AMONG HIS OR HER PERSONNEL.

I THINK THAT'S WHAT WE MEAN THESE DAYS BY "OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH" OR "EMPLOYEE HEALTH." WE'RE CONCERNED WITH MORE THAN AN EMPLOYEE'S SPECIFIC HEALTH NEEDS TO GET A PARTICULAR JOB DONE ... WE'RE CONCERNED WITH THAT EMPLOYEE'S HEALTH NEEDS IN GENERAL.

AS A RESULT, WE'RE BRINGING THE CONCEPTS OF DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION INTO THE WORKPLACE AND ONTO THE WORKSITE. ENLIGHTENED ADMINISTRATORS HAVE ...

- \* MADE TIME FOR EXERCISE ... AND EVEN A PLACE FOR EXERCISE.
- \* THEY'VE BANNED SMOKING ... MAKING THE WORKPLACE "SMOKE-FREE."
- \* THEY'VE PROVIDED ADVICE AND COUNSEL FOR EMPLOYEES ADDICTED TO CERTAIN DRUGS ... ALCOHOL, FOR INSTANCE ... OR COCAINE ... OR NICOTINE.
- \* AND IF THERE'S AN EMPLOYEE CAFETERIA, GOOD ADMINISTRATORS HAVE TRIED TO MAKE SURE THAT IT SERVES HEALTHFUL, NUTRITIONAL MEALS.

THESE ELEMENTS HAVE BECOME PART AND PARCEL OF WHAT WE WOULD CALL "ENLIGHTENED MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION." THEY ARE THE HALLMARKS OF A PROGRESSIVE, OPTIMISTIC, SUCCESSFUL, "PEOPLE-CENTERED" ORGANIZATION.

THAT'S THE KIND OF ORGANIZATION THAT FULFILLS ITS MISSION AND GETS THE JOB DONE BECAUSE ITS EMPLOYEES WORK HARD AND ARE LOYAL ... AND ITS MANAGERS SET REALISTIC GOALS AND CONSISTENTLY ACHIEVE THEM.



THIS APPROACH TO EMPLOYEE HEALTH HAS MANY GOOD OUTCOMES. IT'S POSSIBLE, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR ENLIGHTENED MANAGERS TO SEE PROGRESS AMONG THEIR EMPLOYEES WHO, WITH A LITTLE HELP, TRY TO COPE WITH STRESS AND PRE-MENSTRUAL SYNDROME OR TRY TO REVERSE THE DAMAGE DONE BY ALCOHOLISM OR OBESITY.

THOSE ARE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES AND THEY REFLECT, AGAIN, THE TRIUMPH OF THAT BASIC HUMAN INSTINCT FOR SURVIVAL AND RENEWAL.

AND BECAUSE SUCH EXPERIENCES DO OCCUR AMONG EMPLOYEES WITH THOSE KINDS OF HEALTH PROBLEMS, MANY ADMINISTRATORS AND MANAGERS GO THROUGH AN INITIAL PHASE OF UNCERTAINTY AND CONFUSION AS TO THEIR ROLE IN REGARD TO EMPLOYEES WITH AIDS.

LET ME SPEND THE NEXT FEW MOMENTS ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE:  
THAT IS, AIDS IN THE WORKPLACE.

WHY TALK ABOUT IT AT ALL? FIRST, BECAUSE THE AIDS VIRUS IS STILL SPREADING, BOTH IN THIS COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE 12 MONTHS THAT ENDED ON NOVEMBER 28, WE LOGGED IN 32,000 NEW CASES RIGHT HERE IN THE UNITED STATES.

SINCE THE FIRST 5 CASES OF AIDS WERE RECORDED IN LOS ANGELES BACK IN 1981, WE'VE HAD A TOTAL OF 79,400 CASES REPORTED ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

AT LEAST 5 CASES HAVE THUS FAR BEEN REPORTED FROM EVERY STATE AND TERRITORY IN THE COUNTRY -- EXCEPT FOR THE PACIFIC TRUST TERRITORY, WHICH HAS HAD ONLY ONE.

AND OVER 700 CASES OF AIDS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM EACH OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP 20 CITIES, FROM BOSTON TO SAN DIEGO ... FROM SEATTLE TO TAMPA.

SO WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THIS EPIDEMIC BECAUSE IT'S NOT LETTING UP -- AND IT'S EVERYWHERE.

BUT THAT'S ONLY PART OF THE STORY. THE OTHER PART IS EVEN MORE GRIM: AIDS IS VIRTUALLY 100 PERCENT FATAL. OF THOSE 79,000 AMERICANS WHO WERE REPORTED AS HAVING AIDS SINCE 1981, NEARLY 45,000 HAVE ALREADY DIED.

THAT'S AN OVERALL MORTALITY RATE OF 57 PERCENT.

BUT LET'S LOOK AT THOSE FIGURES MORE CLOSELY. OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS IN 1981, SOME 92 PERCENT HAVE ALREADY DIED.

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

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

SO, EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS DISEASE, WE DO KNOW ONE THING FOR CERTAIN:

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.

AIDS IS SPREAD BY A VIRUS, BUT WE HAVE NO ANTI-VIRAL VACCINE YET. WE'RE WORKING ON IT ... IN FACT, WE'RE IN THE FIRST STAGES OF VACCINE DEVELOPMENT RIGHT NOW. BUT THE FULL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS CAN TAKE THE REST OF THIS CENTURY ... EVEN ON AN ACCELERATED TRACK.

AND THE DRUGS THAT WE'RE LOOKING AT OR THAT WE'RE USING FOR TREATMENT -- SUCH AS A.Z.T. -- ONLY PROLONG A PERSON'S LIFE FOR A FEW MONTHS ... MAYBE A YEAR ... IF THEY WORK. THEY DO NOT CURE ANYONE OF AIDS ... NOR DO THEY CURE ANYONE OF ANY CONDITION BROUGHT ON BY AIDS.

THE HARD TRUTH IS STILL THIS: WE HAVE NO "MAGIC BULLET" OF ANY KIND TO PREVENT AIDS OR STOP IT IN ITS TRACKS.

WHAT WE HAVE INSTEAD IS PUBLIC EDUCATION ABOUT THE DISEASE AND THE WAY IT'S SPREAD. THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION, WE STAND A CHANCE OF SLOWING DOWN AND ONE DAY EVEN REVERSING THE TREND OF THIS EPIDEMIC.

WE CAN CARRY ON AN EDUCATION PROGRAM BECAUSE WE KNOW HOW THE AIDS VIRUS IS TRANSMITTED. IT'S TRANSMITTED IN FOUR WAYS ... AND ONLY FOUR WAYS:

\* FIRST, THE MOST COMMON ROUTE OF TRANSMISSION IS SEXUAL INTERCOURSE ... MOSTLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY ANAL INTERCOURSE, WHICH OCCURS MOST FREQUENTLY AMONG HOMOSEXUALS AND BISEXUAL MALES. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF ALL CASES OF AIDS.

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

\* SECOND, THE AIDS VIRUS IS ALSO TRANSMITTED WHEN INTRAVENOUS DRUG ADDICTS USE THE NEEDLES AND SYRINGES OF OTHER ADDICTS ALREADY INFECTED WITH AIDS VIRUS.



THE VIRUS IS ALSO SPREAD WHEN INFECTED DRUG ADDICTS ENGAGE IN HETEROSEXUAL ACTIVITIES. IN SOME OVERSEAS AREAS, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF THE PROSTITUTES ARE AIDS-POSITIVE. IN SOME AMERICAN CITIES, THE PREVALENCE RATE IS ABOUT 20 PERCENT ... BUT RISING.

\* THE VIRUS CAN ALSO BE TRANSMITTED FROM AN AIDS-INFECTED MOTHER TO HER INFANT DURING PREGNANCY OR AT THE TIME OF DELIVERY.

RIGHT NOW, THIS COUNTRY HAS ABOUT A THOUSAND BABIES NATIONWIDE WHO WERE BORN SEROPOSITIVE ... THAT IS, TESTS MADE AT THE TIME OF BIRTH HAVE CONFIRMED THE PRESENCE OF AIDS VIRUS ANTIBODIES IN THEIR BLOODSTREAMS.

\* AND FINALLY, AIDS CAN BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH TRANSFUSED BLOOD OR BLOOD PRODUCTS. BUT THIS DANGER IS NOW ALMOST STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT.

THE ODDS TODAY OF ANYONE GETTING A CONTAMINATED UNIT OF TRANSFUSED BLOOD ARE BETWEEN 1 IN 40,000 AND 1 IN 250,000. COMPARE THAT WITH, SAY, DEATH ON THE HIGHWAY, WHERE THE ODDS AGAINST YOU ARE AS BAD AS 1 IN ONLY 5,900.

THESE, THEN, ARE THE FOUR ASPECTS OF THE AIDS EPIDEMIC THAT WE ALL SHOULD KEEP IN MIND:

ONE, THAT IT'S SPREADING ...

TWO, THAT IT'S FATAL...

THREE, THAT WE DON'T HAVE A CURE YET ...

AND FOUR, THAT IT'S SPREAD MAINLY BY CERTAIN SPECIFIC HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS INVOLVING SEX AND/OR DRUGS.

THESE FOUR ASPECTS MAKE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE VERY EDGY ABOUT AIDS. AFTER ALL, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF AMERICANS DO NOT ENGAGE IN ANAL SEX NOR DO THEY "SHOOT" DANGEROUS DRUGS. NOR DO THEY APPROVE OF OTHERS WHO DO THESE THINGS.

AND THAT'S WHERE THINGS CAN GET OFF TRACK. SO WE MUST CONSTANTLY MAKE SURE THAT WHAT WE'RE DOING IS FIGHTING A DISEASE, NOT THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE IT.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO COMPROMISE OUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE KIND OF BEHAVIOR THAT MAKES AIDS POSSIBLE. IN FACT, OUR BASIC WEAPON AGAINST AIDS -- EDUCATION -- IS DIRECTED RIGHT AT THOSE HIGH-RISK PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR AND RIGHT AT THE PEOPLE WHO PRACTICE THAT BEHAVIOR SO THAT THEY'LL CHANGE.

BUT EDUCATION IS NOT WHOLESALE CONDEMNATION ... AND IT'S NOT HATE ... AND IT'S NOT FEAR.

ONCE WE INDISCRIMINATELY ATTACK WHOLE GROUPS OF PEOPLE AMONG WHOM THERE MAY BE SOME HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS -- CONDEMNING ALL HOMOSEXUALS, FOR EXAMPLE, BECAUSE OF THE HIGH-RISK LIFESTYLES PRACTICED BY 1 PERCENT OF THEM -- OR ONCE WE ATTACK THOSE HIGH-RISK PEOPLE THEMSELVES THROUGH DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, THEN WE'LL LOSE THIS BATTLE FOR SURE.

WE'LL LOSE THE WAR AGAINST AIDS ... AND WE'LL LOSE THE GOOD SENSE THAT HAS PRESERVED OUR SOCIETY AND KEPT AMERICANS UNITED THROUGHOUT MANY OTHER THREATS TO OUR PUBLIC HEALTH.

HENCE, I WOULD ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU, AS ADMINISTRATORS AND MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, TO LEARN ABOUT THIS DISEASE AND KNOW HOW TO AVOID THE EFFECTS NOT JUST AS THEY AFFECT OUR BODIES, BUT ALSO AS THEY AFFECT OUR THOUGHTS AND OUR FEELINGS AS COMPASSIONATE AND FAIR-MINDED CITIZENS.

YOU MUST NOT USE YOUR IRRATIONAL FEAR OF AIDS AS A SHIELD BEHIND WHICH TO VIOLATE THE ETHICS OF THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE. OVER THE YEARS WE'VE TRIED TO ESTABLISH THE RULES OF FAIRNESS IN ALL OUR WORK ENVIRONMENTS. WE CAN'T ALLOW THE AIDS VIRUS TO INFECT AND DESTROY THAT ASPECT OF THE AMERICAN WAY.

WE'VE SENT THAT MESSAGE TO EDUCATORS ... DOCTORS ... AND HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS WHO ARE TEMPTED TO TURN AWAY PEOPLE WITH AIDS. WE'VE TOLD THEM: "DON'T DO IT."

AND WE'RE SENDING IT TO ADMINISTRATORS, EMPLOYERS, AND MANAGERS WHO ARE TEMPTED TO DISMISS ANY EMPLOYEE WITH AIDS. WE SAY, "DON'T DO IT. IT'S AGAINST THE LAW AND IT'S AGAINST THE AMERICAN ETHIC OF COMPASSION AND FAIR PLAY."

THE SUPREME COURT, THE PRESIDENT, AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAVE ALSO SENT THAT MESSAGE.

THEY'VE ALSO SAID THAT AIDS IS A "HANDICAPPING DISEASE."  
HOWEVER, A PERSON INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS MAY NOT SHOW ANY  
CLINICAL SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS AND, HENCE, BE ABLE TO FUNCTION  
NORMALLY AND ADEQUATELY ON THE JOB.

THEREFORE, CURRENT LAW AND REGULATION SAYS THAT "HIV-  
INFECTED EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE WORKING AS LONG  
AS THEY ARE ABLE TO MAINTAIN ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE AND DO NOT  
POSE A SAFETY OR HEALTH THREAT TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS IN THE  
WORKPLACE." THAT'S NOW FEDERAL POLICY.



AS I INDICATED EARLIER, A PERSON WITH AIDS HAS TO KNOWINGLY DO CERTAIN THINGS TO POSE A SPECIFIC "SAFETY OR HEALTH THREAT" TO OTHERS, SUCH AS PASSING ON THE VIRUS. THE TWO KEY THINGS WOULD BE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE -- ESPECIALLY ANAL INTERCOURSE -- AND THE SHARING OF NEEDLES WHILE "SHOOTING" DANGEROUS DRUGS.

BELIEVE ME, IF THOSE KINDS OF THINGS ARE GOING ON IN YOUR ORGANIZATION DURING THE NORMAL WORKDAY ... THEN, MY FRIENDS, AIDS IS THE LEAST OF YOUR PROBLEMS.

OF COURSE, I'M USED TO TALKING IN THIS MANNER. AS A PHYSICIAN AND AS YOUR SURGEON GENERAL, I'M PART OF A TRADITION OF CARE THAT WILL NOT ABANDON THE SICK AND THE DISABLED, WHOEVER THEY ARE AND WHATEVER THEY MAY HAVE DONE TO HAVE ENDED UP IN SUCH A FIX.

AND I HAVE TAKEN AN OATH TO DO WHATEVER I CAN FOR SUCH PEOPLE EVEN THOUGH I KNOW I CAN'T CURE THEM.

THAT'S THE TRADITION OF MEDICINE. BUT IT ALSO HAPPENS TO BE A FUNDAMENTAL TRADITION OF OUR COUNTRY. AND THIS IS WHERE I HOPE YOU AND I STAND ON COMMON GROUND.

WE CAN BE PROUD OF THE WAY THE UNITED STATES HAS SUCCESSFULLY FACED THE CHALLENGE OF FAIRNESS AND HAS GUARANTEED ALL OUR CITIZENS EQUAL ACCESS TO ALL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACE, COLOR, CREED, AGE, SEX, NATIONAL ORIGIN ... OR HANDICAP.

IT'S NOT AN EASY TRADITION AND WE HAVEN'T BEEN PERFECT AT IT EITHER. BUT OUR RECORD IS STILL VERY GOOD. AND IT'S A RECORD TO BUILD ON ... NOT A RECORD TO IGNORE.

SO THE QUESTION BEFORE US IS SIMPLY THIS:

\* WILL WE LET THE DISEASE OF AIDS -- ALL BY ITSELF --  
REVERSE THIS SPECIAL AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN HISTORY?

WE HOPE AND PRAY THAT THAT WON'T HAPPEN.

BUT HOPES AND PRAYERS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH. WE NEED TO  
REINFORCE THOSE HOPES AND PRAYERS WITH COURAGE AND COMPASSION AT  
EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT ... IN EVERY OFFICE AND MEETING-ROOM  
... AND AT EVERY WORK STATION.

WE MUST FIGHT THIS DISEASE WITH GOOD SCIENCE ... AND WITH GOOD SENSE. IF WE DO, WE MAY YET GIVE THE WORLD SOMETHING EVERY BIT AS PRECIOUS AS THE MUCH-DESIRED AIDS VACCINE:

WE COULD GIVE THE WORLD A GENUINE DEMONSTRATION OF THE POWER OF COMPASSION AND JUSTICE IN THE BATTLE AGAINST THIS DREAD DISEASE OF AIDS.

THAT'S MY HOPE. MAYBE IT CAN BE YOURS AS WELL.

ONCE AGAIN...THANK YOU.

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