



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME

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Press Release
Tuesday, November 7, 1989

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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON AIDS TAKES POSITION ON BLEACH AND HIV CONTROL RESEARCH

The National Commission on AIDS today released a statement in support of research projects designed to determine the effectiveness of bleach distribution to intravenous drug users as a means to control the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS. The statement says:

"The National Commission on AIDS strongly supports the continuation of research and demonstration projects involving the distribution of bleach to reduce the spread of HIV among intravenous drug users until the efficacy of this approach can be determined. This determination should be made by the Assistant Secretary for Health or the Secretary of Health and Human Services."

Dr. June Osborn, Chairman of the Commission, said today that it is important to public health to know whether any of the various methods of distributing bleach to IV drug users can reduce the spread of HIV.

Dr. David Rogers, Vice Chairman of the Commission, said, "In the United States the conquest of AIDS will be determined by how effectively we can contain the spread of HIV among drug users."

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Several experiments are underway in the United States to distribute common household bleach to IV drug users in the hope that it would be used to sterilize shared syringes and hypodermic needles.

Currently there is an increase in the rate of new cases of HIV disease among IV drug users. IV drug users also account for many heterosexually transmitted cases of AIDS. Most infants who contract HIV disease are infected by their mothers who are either IV drug users or the sexual partners of IV drug users.

Congress may deal with the bleach issue during reconsideration of the upcoming FY '90 appropriation bill for the Department of Health and Human Services.

The National Commission on AIDS is an independent body created by Congress to oversee the national efforts against the AIDS epidemic and to make "recommendations for a consistent national policy concerning AIDS."

Five members were appointed by the Senate, five by the House and two by the White House. In addition the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs are non-voting members.