

Few cases of AIDS reported in county

By Lisa Olmon
Staff writer

As the media barks out growing AIDS statistics daily, Oakland County health officials report few cases of the disease in Oakland County.

Health care officials, actor Rock Hudson's contraction of the disease, and potential problems in schools with

students who have the disease all heighten community awareness toward AIDS — Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Homosexuals, intravenous drug abusers and people who receive blood transfusions on a regular basis like hemophiliacs comprise the high risk population, said Joel Blotstein, epidemiologist with the Oakland County Health Department.

"A portion of the body's immune system is altered or rendered ineffective," Blotstein said.

What Blotstein called opportunistic infections — infections that are unusual in a healthy population — invade a victim's body. "Organisms take the opportunity to infect the person and are

able to proliferate and cause disease," Blotstein said. "A normal person would counter them (the organisms) easily."

CHRONIC INFECTIONS that afflict an individual with AIDS include a form of pneumonia, infections to the esophagus and mouth area commonly known as thrush, herpes infections, an infection that is similar to tuberculosis, and a form of skin cancer, which causes purplish bruise-like lesions on the body's surface.

"There has been a lot of concern here in Michigan, but we don't see that many cases," Blotstein said.

No cases of AIDS were reported in 1981 or 1982. Reports show one case in

1983, eight in 1984 and nine to date this year in Oakland County, according to Blotstein.

Of the 18 Oakland County residents who have contracted AIDS, all have been adults. The average victim age is 34-35, Blotstein said. Most victims have been members of the high risk population.

Of 90 reported AIDS victims in Michigan, two-thirds have been in the metro-area, Blotstein said. Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit has shown the strongest interest in the disease, Blotstein said.

HENRY FORD has treated the highest number of victims and is most fa-

miliar with the disease.

Health care professionals who might come in contact with the disease must take special precautions, according to Dr. Gerald Blackburg, infectious disease director at Botolph General Hospital in Farmington Hills.

"Protecting oneself against that person's (an AIDS victim) body secretions and, in particular, blood," is most important, Blackburg said.

A test that is used to identify AIDS victims has a high incidence of false positivity, Blackburg said.

Even if the test results are positive, it doesn't mean a person definitely has AIDS, causing an anxiety-producing situation, according to Blackburg.

Study up Candidates' forums scheduled

The Farmington Hills city clerk's office will be open an additional hour Monday, Oct. 7 — from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. — the last day to register to vote in the Tuesday, Nov. 5, city council election. The office is in the City Hall at 31555 11 Mile.

The public can meet the five candidates seeking four seats on the Farmington Hills City Council at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 8, in the city council chambers, 31555 11 Mile.

The candidates' forum is sponsored by the Farmington Area Republican Club, the Farmington Democratic Club and the League of Women Voters of the West Bloomfield-Farmington Area.

A question-and-answer period will follow formal presentations by the candidates.

SEEKING SEATS are incumbents Jan Dolan, Jodi Soreen and Ben Marks, veteran campaigner Terry Sever and political newcomer Jonathan Grant.

"Candidates Night" will be produced by the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services Video Production Division. It will be broadcast on Cable Channel 12 at the following times:

- 6-7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 11.
- 8:30-9:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 15.
- 4-5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 18.
- 7-8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 23.
- 1-2 p.m., 7-8 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 29.

• 6-9 p.m., Monday, Nov. 4.

THE LEAGUE will host a candidates' forum for the six candidates seeking three seats on the Farmington City Council at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9 in the city council chambers, 23600

Liberty. It too will be videotaped for repeat broadcasting on Cable Channel 12. In the running are incumbents Alton Bennett and Roger Walker and challengers Arnold Campbell, Elizabeth Mielich, Richard Tupper and Gerald Lynch.

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