

State-paid AIDS tests in Senate bill

By Tim Richard
Staff writer

An AIDS prevention bill last week sailed through the Michigan Senate with no debate but lots of explanation. This week it goes to the House of Representatives.

"It has consumed an enormous amount of work over a couple of years," said Senate Majority Leader John Engler, R-Mount Pleasant.

All seven Observer & Eccentric area senators supported SB 544 in its 33-0 passage.

SPONSOR William Sederburg, R-East Lansing, said the bill takes nine steps toward containing and curing Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, a so far incurable disease transmitted through bodily fluids, either sexually or intravenously.

"We need to find ways to prevent and treat it," he said.

While only 461 persons in Michigan now have it, Sederburg said, that is expected to rise to 3,500 by 1991 and ultimately to 18,000.

At a cost of \$50,000 each for care, AIDS victims will cost society \$900 million and the state Medicaid budget \$150 million, he said.

Programs costs were not included in the bill. Sederburg said they will be covered by a trust fund. It will be financed by a cigarette tax increase bill and a tax on smokeless (chewing) tobacco expected later this year.

SEDERBURG'S bill provides for:

- State-paid AIDS testing to all Michigan residents and all students attending college in the state, whether public or private. Tests results will be confidential. Those tested would be required to undergo counseling both before and after the tests.
- An AIDS Risk Reduction and Aids Policy Commission within the state Department of Public Health. Its nine members are to be appointed by Oct. 1 and will represent business, labor, health care providers, lawyers, religious groups and state and local government. The panel will be governed by the Open Meetings Act.
- A clearinghouse program accessible to the public with information on risk factors, risk reduction service providers and treatment programs.
- A media information program.
- An education program in K-12 schools.
- A risk reduction and education program in colleges.
- Local alternative AIDS information packets.
- AIDS information packets for every residence in the state.

MADD sets Monday vigil

A candlelight vigil to remember people killed by drunk drivers will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, by the Oakland County chapter of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

Site will be Nardin Park Methodist Church, 11 Mile west of Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

Chapter president Greg Blen said Oakland Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson and Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer will read the names of more than 100 people who have lost their lives this year in Oakland and Macomb counties. The vigil is open to the public.

Blen said information on MADD is available from its headquarters at 333-3060. Call that number if you wish to have a name read at the vigil.

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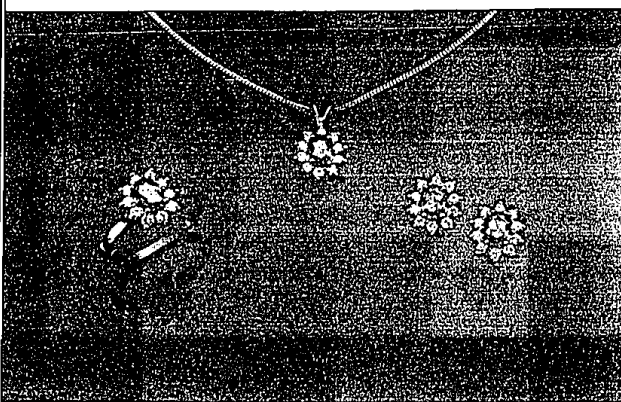
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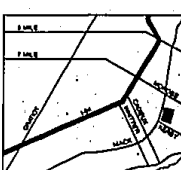
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