

Residents answer W's T-shirts benefit work of hospices poll on health care



RENEE MAHLER

The results are quite interesting. I think you might like to see the types of questions asked and the answers received.

When asked what people thought was the biggest problem facing Michigan, most stated that the first was a need for more jobs and the second was affordable health care. Individuals 55-64 were among those who saw affordable health care as the state's biggest problem. Two-thirds believe that the state or federal government should bear the burden of medical care costs while 77 percent were opposed to reducing the availability of health services as a method to be used to control costs.

Although concerned with crime and criminals, more than 400 people interviewed believe that health care should be given a higher priority than prisons. Limits on payments from medical malpractice lawsuits were favored by 76 percent of those answering the questionnaire while 44 percent believe that incompetent physicians and other health care professionals are a major reason contributing to the high costs of medical malpractice suits and insurance.

In regard to doctors, 58 percent agreed that physicians should be able to legally help their terminally ill patients end their life. It was also found that low-income respondents were more likely than even older adults to report declining health. This could be due to the fact that low-income persons either do not have access to proper health care or

cannot afford it.

When the people surveyed were asked to name the greatest threat to their own health care was listed by 31 percent, 25 percent said affording medical insurance and 11 percent stated that taking care of older family members was detrimental to their own health.

This is just a sampling of the questions asked on the survey. However, one fact is quite obvious. Health care and affordable health care is of great concern not only to older adults but to all Michigan citizens. What was of particular interest to me was the number of people who believe that caregiving, for an older spouse, relative or friend, is a direct threat to the caregiver's own health.

Indeed caregiving is a difficult job and one that can be quite detrimental to the physical and emotional health of the caregiver and even other family members. Often caregivers do not know there are agencies and organizations to help. They may not know how to contact these agencies either, or that many of the services are based on an ability-to-pay, sliding-scale fee. Some of them are free.

In certain instances Medicare or Medicaid will help with the costs. The best place to seek information is at your local area agency on aging or disease-specific organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association, Parkinson Foundation, American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association.

These services are listed in your local telephone directories. They offer a variety of programs and services that certainly will help make caregiving easier.

Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and the director of communications and admission at a Rochester Hills nursing facility. She is a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging. Send your questions to her at the Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

When it comes to celebrating a birthday, W magazine is doing it with style and in a unique way.

The fashion magazine turned 20 years old this year. Created from its "mother publication," *Women's Wear Daily*, it has been "taking the fashions from the runways in Paris to people all over the world" for two decades. And that might explain why its birthday celebration has a worldwide bent and its birthday present is going to seven AIDS hospice services.

Six of the top designers — Giorgio Armani, Karl Lagerfeld, Donna Karan, Isaac Mizrahi, Calvin Klein and Jean Paul Gaultier — didn't say no when approached by the magazine to design commemorative T-shirts. They are being sold through selective retailers, including Jacobson stores in Livonia, Birmingham, Rochester, Grosse Pointe, Ann Arbor and Dearborn, at \$20 each.

"We've lost a lot of very famous designers to AIDS and we decided we wanted to give something back to the community and the people who have supported us with this spectacular T-shirt promotion," said Stephanie George, publisher of W magazine at a kick-off tea at Jacobson's Birmingham store July 21.

Money garnered from the sale of the T-shirts will go to the AIDS program of the Hospice of Southeastern Michigan in Southfield, City of Angels Hospice in Hollywood, Calif., Centro Teresa Gabrielli in Milan, Italy, AIDS Resource Center's Bailey House in New York City, Hospital Necker in Paris, France, and Shanti Project in San Francisco, Calif.

Hospice of Southeastern Michigan is the third largest hospice in the United States. It recently opened a 16-bed AIDS unit in Detroit with the help of a \$100,000

grant and furnished with the help of the Kmart Corp.

HSEM president and chief executive officer Carolyn Fitzpatrick Casin hopes the T-shirt sales will provide enough money to open a second unit on Detroit's eastside.

"We found the most pressing need in the last few years was in the care of AIDS patients," she said. "We did it in the home for four years before opening our AIDS unit in Detroit. The 15 beds were filled in the first two months and now we have a waiting list."

Presently, 5 percent of HSEM's patients have AIDS.

Casin is excited about the T-shirt promotion and agency's "new partnership" with Jacobson's, lauding the retailer for its "commitment to the community and its willingness to take a leadership role" in forwarding the work of hospices. She also had praise for W magazine.

"I'm very impressed that the publishers of W magazine realize the importance of hospice care for people with AIDS," she said. "The number of people with AIDS is increasing every year, so there will be an even greater need for hospice services."

"We are very grateful to W and to Jacobson's for their help in supporting AIDS hospice care."

George would like to raise \$2 million for the hospice programs and, if the enthusiasm at the by invitation only tea is any indication, she will have little trouble selling the necessary 500,000 T-shirts. Casin estimates that local sales of 50,000 of the shirts will be enough to open a second AIDS hospice unit.

The 100 percent cotton T-shirts come in one size. They will be available only through Aug. 15 at Jacobson stores or by mail by calling 1-800-222-WMAG. There's an additional charge for shipping and handling.



JIM JACOBFIELD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Too Time: Jacobson stores in Livonia, Rochester, Birmingham, Ann Arbor and Dearborn are selling T-shirts designed by Giorgio Armani, Karl Lagerfeld, Donna Karan, Isaac Mizrahi, Calvin Klein and Jean Paul Gaultier for the benefit of the Hospice of Southeastern Michigan.

Counsel from page 1C

Two counselors at a center in Farmington Hills gave the following comments about gay men and women but preferred not to have their names used, to protect the identity of individuals who may be known to be their clients.

A woman psychologist at the center, who has many lesbian clients, said she goes along with the Kinsey Report on sexuality. "There's probably 10 percent (of the population) that has a predetermined definite sexuality. The other 80 percent in that continuum falls between homosexual and heterosexual."

fulfilling relationship, it's not an issue anymore."

She said lesbians seem to become aware of their sexual orientation not in childhood but during their teenage years.

A male, clinical social worker at the same counseling center said he thinks gays are probably born that way. "From everything I have read and seen there has to be some kind of genetic factor involved in it. In some families there are brothers that are both gay, or gay cousins."

He said that in talking to gay men, from the time they were small children they knew they were different from the other guys. "It has to be set early in the family system."

The social worker doesn't believe mothers should get blamed for sons who are gay. "There's enough shame involved in the way society looks at gay people, without the family taking on blame, he said.

He periodically runs a support group for gay males, and for HIV-positive males. These counseling sessions last 8-12 weeks.

A high percentage

She reports that lesbians are not a small percentage among homosexuals but instead constitute 50 percent of those individuals.

The psychologist said most of the lesbians seek her help for problems unrelated to their sexual preference. "That's not really a treatment issue. When anyone's involved in a

Gays from page 1C

He said the revelation produces a myriad of emotions: a sense of loss, anger and, later, a feeling of resolution.

"You go through a sense of loss because you realize there are some things you'll never have," John said. "You'll never have a wife and

the 3.2 kids, the traditional family life. You know you won't have that family in the traditional sense.

"There's anger, sure. You're isolated and there's a lot of negative attitudes towards the gay community."

United Way funds to help cancer patients

Oakland County cancer patients stand to benefit from the United Way of Oakland County's 1992-1993 allocation of \$56,243 to the Michigan Cancer Foundation.

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tributions to the United Way of Oakland County, will provide such items as pain medication, wheelchairs and cancer pads, as well as rehabilitation services.

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