

GOVERNOR CHILES' AIDS ACTION PLAN

March 24, 1993

The Governor will establish an interdepartmental work group chaired by a member of the Governor's Office or his designee. The work group will include an HIV- infected individual as well as representatives from the business and medical communities, the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, Attorney General's Office, Department of Insurance, Department of Corrections, Department of Professional Regulation and the Agency for Health Care Administration. The work group will convene periodically to develop and refine the issues and recommendations raised by the Red Ribbon Panel, as well as new issues that arise, and will move aggressively forward to control the spread of HIV and AIDS.

II. The Governor will conduct an annual leadership conference on AIDS. This conference will bring together important leaders in AIDS from both the public and private sectors to develop mutual goals and identify available resources that can be used in controlling the epidemic.

III. The governor supports most of the provisions in CS/HB421, the proposed legislation that incorporates a majority of the recommendations by the Governor's Red Ribbon Panel on AIDS. This includes strengthening HIV education and prevention efforts, anti-discrimination protections and counseling provisions. Increased condom awareness will be promoted with the consent and involvement of local school boards, as warranted. Among the bill's provisions that the Governor supports are: Expansion of the insurance continuation program, which pays the health insurance premiums for eligible HIV- infected individuals, thereby reducing the medical care costs borne by the state. The Health Council of South Florida has determined that this program produces a savings of \$5 for every \$1 invested. A pilot demonstration project on needle exchange for Dade county, which has 30 percent of all AIDS cases in the state. In similar pilot projects, needle exchange has been proven to reduce HIV transmission and decrease the public health burden associated with drug addiction. The Governor will direct the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services to administer the project through private funding and in a manner that also helps injection drug users to access drug treatment.

IV. The Governor will continue to work with the AIDS-affected communities and the Legislature to strengthen anti-discrimination laws, to protect persons infected with HIV or diagnosed with AIDS from unfair practices in employment, housing, insurance, medical care or any other area.

GOVERNOR ADVOCATES AIDS ACTION PLAN TO Strengthen STATE'S PREVENTION and RESPONSE EFFORTS

TALLAHASSEE -- Governor Lawton Chiles today unveiled his AIDS Action Plan -- a comprehensive strategy aimed at protecting the uninfected citizens of Florida while improving the lives of those already infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The AIDS Action Plan is based largely on recommendations made by the Governor's Red Ribbon Panel on AIDS. The Governor appointed the 11-member panel, chaired by former state Rep. Lois Frankel, to find ways to strengthen Florida's preventive and education efforts against AIDS and to study related issues arising from the series of public meetings held throughout the state in December.

"The tragic scope of this epidemic demands that Florida use every reasonable approach to fighting this disease and prevention and education are paramount," Governor Chile's said. "The AIDS Action Plan I am presenting today represents a genuine commitment to simple but vital objectives - to save lives and, just as importantly, to help keep hope alive until a more lasting answer is found."

Primary components of the Governor's AIDS Action Plan, which includes support for several initiatives contained in CS/Senate Bill 1246 that is pending before the Legislature, are:

Creation of a permanent inter-agency AIDS advisory work group that will include a person infected with HIV as well as representatives of the medical and business communities. The Governor's Chief of Staff, Tom Herndon, will coordinate this effort. Establishment of an annual leadership conference on AIDS to bring together important leaders on AIDS from both the public and private sectors. Expansion of insurance continuation program, which pays health insurance premiums of eligible HIV-infected individuals, reducing the costs of medical care borne by the state. Establishment of a privately funded needle exchange pilot program in Dade County, as a proven means of reducing HIV transmission, decreasing the public health burden of drug addiction and helping injection drug users to access drug treatment. Develop a sound process for extending current requirements that physicians inform county public health units of positive test results for sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, to also include HIV infection. This would enable county public health clinics to offer counseling and voluntary partner notification services to infected individuals. Anonymous testing would still be available at designated county public health

units. AIDS training for school health teachers, to enable them to effectively and knowledgeably counsel students about HIV and AIDS prevention.

AIDS awareness program on all state college and university campuses to inform students and staff about HIV and AIDS prevention. Increased condom awareness in public schools with the local consent of school boards in each county. Continuation of efforts to strengthen laws against disclosure of HIV status and HIV discrimination, specifically in the areas of housing, employment and insurance. "This plan is about protecting against the most serious public health threat we have known in modern times," Chiles said. "Reasonable people may disagree on some of the approaches, but no one should doubt our resolve to protect the public health individuals and families with education, prevention and treatment. "I also want to work with health professionals and advocacy groups over the next year to develop a sound process for infection reporting and to launch a public education campaign to explain why this step is necessary."

STATEMENT BY GOVERNOR LAWTON CHILES ON ISSUE OF HIV INFECTION-REPORTING

March 25, 1993

"Our first priority in any health epidemic is to protect those who are uninfected. I support the concept of HIV infection reporting, which would help us improve our response to the AIDS epidemic by giving us a better idea of the extent HIV has invaded our communities and enabling us to inform and offer counseling to citizens who otherwise may not know of their HIV status.

But there are still real concerns about establishing adequate safeguards to prevent a breach of confidentiality that could lead to discrimination. Until we are sure such safeguards are in place and we can educate people about them, I believe that requiring infection reporting at this time is not appropriate and could even discourage citizens from being tested." Governor Lawton Chiles' Remarks

PRESENTATION OF FLORIDA AIDS ACTION PLAN

March 24, 1993

I highly commend Lois Frankel and the Red Ribbon Panel on AIDS for the devotion and hard work they put into developing their comprehensive report on improving Florida's effort against AIDS. I have closely reviewed each of the panel's recommendations, and I stand behind the great majority of their advisements.

Though I cannot endorse all of the panel's 43 recommendations, I strongly encourage that necessary and appropriate actions be taken to implement the AIDS Action Plan I am advocating today.

The AIDS epidemic, and the numerous ramifications that come with it, are proving to be the most serious public health threat we have known in modern times. We will only be successful in addressing this threat if we have the resolve to attempt new and unique approaches, and if we secure the commitment of all of Florida's citizens.

Florida is responding to a dramatically increasing number of AIDS cases. Although we rank fourth nationally in population, only two states exceed Florida's number of citizens diagnosed with AIDS, and only one other state surpasses us both in the number of AIDS cases among women and among children.

This clearly is the time for action and leadership not for finger-pointing, not for prejudice or bigotry and certainly not for looking the other way.

I have said consistently that Florida must consider every reasonable approach to fighting this disease, and that prevention and education are paramount.

Florida tragically has found itself at the forefront of this battle. Now we can fight.. .or we can turn and run. I'm not ready to surrender and I don't believe the loved ones of the more than 16,000 Floridians who have died of AIDS -- or the tens of thousands of Floridian's who are living with HIV are ready, either. This plan is about protecting against the most serious public health threat we have known in modern times. Difficult challenges and decisions confront us in fighting this terrible threat.

Reasonable people may disagree on some of the approaches, but no one should doubt our resolve to protect the public health to protect individuals and families with education, prevention and treatment.

I want to work with health professionals and advocacy groups, to develop a sound process for infection reporting and to launch a public education campaign to explain why this step is necessary.

The AIDS Action Plan I am presenting today represents a genuine commitment to simple but vital objectives to save lives and, just as importantly, to help keep hope alive until a more lasting

answer is found.

Now, I want to recognize some of the people who will be serving on the interagency work group I will be appointing soon:

-- Greg Durden, head of the civil rights division in the Attorney General's Office

-- Herb Clark, chief of staff for the Insurance Commissioner's Office

-- Mae Waters with the Department of Education

-- Dr. Charles Mahan, state health officer

-- Lt. Governor and soon-to-be Acting HRS Secretary Buddy MacKay

--Tom Herndon, my chief of staff, who will be chairing the group. We're also pleased to have Charlie Reed of the State University System here with us today, as well as representatives of several organizations that will be working with us, including the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Businesses.