

The OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

of the

National Coalition of

Gay STD Services

October, 1979

#2

This Newsletter is published by The National Coalition of Gay STD Services. Suggestions for articles on sexually transmitted diseases in gay people, questions about VD, and inquiries about membership in the Coalition (\$10 for individuals (nonvoting), and \$20 for VD clinics, organizations, services, & programs may be addressed to: Mark Behar, Chairperson, ncgSTDs, 2161 N. Pierce #9, Arlington, VA 22209, (703) 525-0771.

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THE NATIONAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON. . .

The National Gay Task Force has requested the National Gay Health Coalition (NGHC) to coordinate the health piece of the Washington lobbying effort on Monday, October 15, following Sunday's March. Walter Lear, MD, of the NGHC has scheduled a meeting with the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, Julius B. Richmond, MD, and needs suggestions of issues, topics, and requests to be brought up; names of people from our group who would like to participate in the meeting; and suggestions of other federal officials to visit and agenda items for such visits. Contact Walter at one of these numbers: (717) 783-1690, (717) 783-8804, or (215) 386-5327.

. . .and MARCH WITH THE HEALTH CONTINGENT

The National Gay Health Coalition and many national and local gay health organizations have endorsed the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, October 14, and members of these organizations will carry the banners of their organizations in the health workers' contingent. The health workers' contingent will assemble at 11:30 am on the Mall side (south side) of the National Gallery of Art, just west of 4th Street. Your professional and life styles rights are under attack! We must be seen and heard. Join us! (Reprinted from the NGHC, with permission.)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MAILING LIST CORRECTIONS

All Coalition mailings & newsletters have been sent to everyone on our mailing lists, irrespective of their membership status, because we feel that it is important to disseminate information to as many gay STD services and representatives as possible. This will benefit our clients, who are our prime concern. However, the total cost of each mailing is rather high and we must therefore seek ways to reduce these expenses (postage, paper supplies, etc.). Please bring to our attention any inaccuracies on our mailing list, and please pay your dues if you haven't done so already. Contributions are most welcome! Please send mailing list additions or corrections to the Coalition, 2161 N. Pierce #9, Arlington, VA 22209. Delete the Metro Detroit Gay VD Council (Detroit, MI), and the Corral Club Baths VD Clinic, (Studio City, North Hollywood, CA). Correct the Minneapolis Gay Community Services Center address to: 2855 Park Ave., Minneapolis; correct also Tim Tillotson's address: University Health Service, 1552 University Av., Madison, WI 53706. Add Al Obermaier's name as director of the Gay Community Services of Tucson, AZ

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OCTOBER JOKE: Three men were approaching St. Peter, watchguard of the Pearly Gates at the entrance to Heaven, after their deaths. "And what was the cause of your death?" St. Peter asked the first man. "I died as a result of a terrible auto accident," he replied. "Well, that's no reason to keep you out of Heaven," St. Peter said as he waved the man in. continued on p. 3.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION FOR MD'S OFFERED

The New York City Department of Health and the American Foundation for the Prevention of VD are cosponsoring a continuing medical education seminar for MD's (7 hours CME credit), entitled "STD's in the '80s" (referring to the new decade rather than octogenarians!), Sunday, November 4, 8 am-5 pm at the New York City Health Department, 125 Worth St., 2nd floor. Among the notable speakers and topics are Paul Wiesner on gonorrhea, James Curran on pelvic inflammatory diseases, H. Hunter Handsfield on NGU & chlamydia, John Cutler on VD prevention, William Darrow on social & psychological aspects of STDs, P. Frederick Sparling on the diagnosis & treatment of syphilis, and our own Dan Willim on amebiasis & giardiasis. Registration for physicians is \$50, which includes lunch and refreshments. For further information or reservations, contact: The American Foundation for the Prevention of VD, 335 Broadway, New York, NY 10013.

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RESPONSIBLE HEALTH BEHAVIOR PROMOTED--AN OPINION
by Tim Tillotson, Madison, WI

There may be a strategic advantage in promoting "responsible health behavior," rather than "responsible sexual behavior," although both are certainly important. But if you had to assign the following items to either the "health" or "sexual" behavior category, where would you put them?

1) Frequency of routine checkups dependant upon number of partners and circumstances of contact. 2) Open discussion of client's sexuality with health workers & clinic personnel, who educate clients and insure that the appropriate testing gets done. 3) Client's disclosure to their sex partners of the date of their most recent STD exam and arrangements for notification in case infection is discovered later. 4) Learning signs & symptoms of STDs. 5) Getting checked promptly if symptoms appear. and 6) If partners are infrequently checked, get tested more frequently for both client's and client's partner's sake. My experience has been that poeple are more receptive to suggestions for improving their health behavior (or for decreasing their disease risk factors) than they are to suggestions for changing their sexual behavior or lifestyle. What do you think?

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GAY PUBLIC HEALTH WORKER'S CAUCUS EXTENDS INVITATION TO COALITION MEMBERS
from Bopper Deyton, General Coordinator, Caucus of Gay Public Health
Workers of the American Public Health Association

I want to convey the support, anticipation and pleasure of the Caucus of Gay Public Health Workers of the American Public Health Association regarding the formation of the National Coalition of Gay STD Services. An operational and communication network of the growing number of gay STD clinical facilities can only benefit the Nation's 22 million gay men and lesbians and hasten the achievement of our mutual goals.

On the occasion of the meeting of the National Coalition of Gay STD Services in New York City, November 3 and the fifth annual meeting of the Caucus of Gay Public Health Workers at the American Public Health Association Convention, I extend an invitation to all Coalition members and friends to a social hour in our Caucus Hospitality Suite at the Taft Hotel, 777 Seventh Av. (at 51st St.), Saturday, November 3, 1079, 8:00 pm. Please come and meet GPHW members and friends, and participate in the activities of our annual meeting!

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There's more! Turn to page 3. . .

COALITION'S SECOND MEETING ON NOVEMBER 3 IN NYC

The National Coalition of Gay STD Services' second meeting will precede the American Public Health Association's 107th Annual Meeting in New York, Saturday, November 3, 1979 at the Gay Men's Health Project, 74 Grove St., Room 2RW, at 4 pm. (Further notification or RSVP will NOT be sent!) Some of the agenda items for the meeting will be: 1) utilization of the Hospital Code for Diseases to aid in data collection for research (Robert Bolan, MD, San Francisco); 2) fundraising ideas for encouraging gay STD research, and ongoing support for gay STD services; 3) centralized data storage; 4) affiliations with drug companies; 5) political lobbying; 6) need for standardization of procedures among STD services; 7) possible construction of a malpractice contingency fund; 8) associations with the STD Task Force of the APHA's Caucus of Gay Public Health Workers. Ron Vachon from the Task Force will be a guest speaker at our meeting. 9) suggestions for developing a widely circulated statement supporting "responsible sexual (or health) behavior for gay people," especially for the purpose of promoting STD awareness & health care (see Tim Tillotson's article on p. 2); We would encourage this platform to be published in the gay media, posted in bars, etc.; 10) development of a patient education packet on STDs for gay people. This requires samples of all your Service's educational materials, so please remember to bring them to the meeting! 11) a medical-scientific conference in San Francisco during the summer of 1980, on STDs in gay people. ANY COALITION MEMBERS UNABLE TO ATTEND THIS MEETING BUT INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING A CONFERENCE CALL HOOKUP, CONTACT MARK BEHAR, CHAIRPERSON OF THE COALITION (ADDRESS & PHONE ON PAGE 1) BEFORE OCTOBER 26! Join us for the meeting and the social hour with our friends from the Caucus (see invitation, page 2)!

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SAFETY OF BUTYL NITRITE QUESTIONED

The September, 1979 issue of Annals of Internal Medicine (volume 91(3) pages 417-18) reports that butyl nitrite ("poppers", "room deodorizer", "Rush", "Locker Room", etc.) can cause subclinical methemoglobinemia in normal (healthy) subjects and higher levels of methemoglobin in reductase-deficient persons. In other words, the oxygen carrying capacity of blood (hemoglobin) is temporarily altered.

Since butyl nitrite frequently is used as an aphrodisiac it is important for us as representatives of gay STD services across the nation to keep advised of clinical reports and research involving this drug and to make appropriate recommendations concerning its use. The Coalition has established a file of reports published on the effects of butyl--so please contribute articles or other information so that we may enlarge our file and keep you abreast of the latest findings.

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OCTOBER JOKE, continued

"And what was the cause of your death?" he asked the second man. "I died of a heart attack," he replied. And he too was allowed to enter, since that was no reason to keep someone out of Heaven. "And what was the cause of your death?" he asked the third man. "I died of gonorrhoea," he muttered. "People don't die from gonorrhoea," St. Peter replied. "You do when you give it to Willie Jackson!" the man exclaimed.

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In future issues of the NEWSLETTER: articles on Hepatitis (Are gays the CDC's new "niggers?"); Patient consent & confidentiality: Your medical records.