

# HIV/AIDS & HRC

Two Decades of Fighting for Life



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## INTRODUCTION

As the tragedy of HIV has unfolded over the past two decades, the focus and response of people with HIV/AIDS and their advocates has changed. In the 1980s, individual activists and advocacy groups, including the then-Human Rights Campaign Fund, worked mightily to educate the public about this disease. It was a daunting task. Parents were afraid to let their children attend the same schools as students with HIV, religious conservatives framed the epidemic as a well-deserved blight upon gay men, misconceptions about how the disease could be transmitted were common, and the news media detailed incidents of discrimination, hostility and violence toward people with HIV and AIDS. Moreover, the hysteria and fear were not limited to the streets and schools. Congress considered bills proposing to quarantine gay men; to require the testing and recording of patients' HIV status; to create a national database identifying carriers of the virus; and to refuse entry to international visitors based on their HIV status.

As groups emerged to promote research and protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, their actions to force attention on the epidemic began slowly to work. They led candlelight vigils and convened prestigious medical conferences; they created the remarkable AIDS Memorial Quilt; they sought out HIV-infected celebrities willing to speak out; and they assailed the government institutions charged with preserving the U.S. public health and welfare.

It took seven years for the president himself to acknowledge the epidemic, but eventually the U.S. government responded, although it still lagged behind the recommendations of the World Health Organization. One decade into the epidemic, the first major government investment in treating people with HIV/AIDS – the Ryan White CARE Act -- became law. It was named for an Indiana teen-ager barred from school because of his HIV infection. White and others, including Magic Johnson, Arthur Ashe and Rock Hudson, put a human face to the disease. Needle-exchange programs were launched in cities from New York to San Francisco, and some public schools began teaching young people how to protect themselves against the virus. The national hysteria was waning but constant effort would be required to keep it in check.

Meanwhile, vicious battles were waged on the floor of the House and Senate over just how the government should respond. Countless organizations, HRC among them, lobbied to establish and protect programs such as Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS. Each legislative session, amendments would be tacked onto bills seeking to gut various AIDS care and prevention programs, and each year, advocates for people living with HIV/AIDS would have to fight against them.

Today, AIDS is the top cause of death for people between ages 25 and 44. Moreover, new and expanded education programs are badly needed as AIDS has exploded in communities of color. Though a mere 8 percent of the U.S. population, African-American males comprise nearly 50 percent of new AIDS cases.

Worldwide, the status of the epidemic is staggering. One out of every 100 people on the planet has AIDS, it is estimated that 53 million people are living with HIV, and 17 million have died. In some nations, a quarter of the entire population is infected with HIV. In recent months, foreign governments have assailed U.S. drug manufacturers over the precipitous prices of antiretroviral drugs – the only hope of many people living with HIV/AIDS but which cost more than the per-capita income of many developing countries.

This timeline is not designed to be exhaustive or present every milestone in our 20-year journey. It is designed to present a snapshot of how far we have come and how far we must still go.

While a great deal of progress has been made in the last 20 years, and there are glimmers of hope in new vaccine trials, this period will be seen as a mere fraction of the lifespan of the epidemic. In coming decades, HRC will continue to fight, alongside thousands of others, until the disease is defeated.

## 1980

- Unknown to science at the time, an estimated 31 people have already died of what would be known years later as AIDS.
- **April 22. Steve Endean founds the Human Rights Campaign Fund to raise money for congressional candidates who support gay and lesbian equality.**

## 1981

- June 5. The Centers for Disease Control's "Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report" publishes the first account of a cluster of peculiar deaths from a syndrome that would later be named AIDS. The initial outbreak began when the CDC noted a disturbingly high number of cases of the rare cancer Kaposi's sarcoma and a relatively rare pneumonia, *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, among otherwise healthy gay men in San Francisco.
- The phenomenon is initially called "gay cancer," and then "gay-related immune deficiency," or GRID; unexplained cases of the rare diseases appear in drug users later in the year.
- A total of 335 cases are diagnosed; 158 of these people die.
- Gay Men's Health Crisis, an AIDS services, education and advocacy group, is founded by volunteers in New York City.

## 1982

*1,580 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 603 have died.*

- *The Wall Street Journal* reports that GRID is now appearing in women and male heterosexual drug users. Symptoms later appear in hemophiliacs and Haitian refugees in Miami. It becomes apparent that the disease is caused by an infectious agent linked to blood, and it is given a new name - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or *AIDS*.
- May 2. The first of many candlelight vigils and demonstrations in front of the Capitol by people with AIDS brings attention to their plight and remembers those who have died.
- A conference in Denver quickly follows, and groups such as the **National Association of People With AIDS** emerge; those affected by the epidemic demand attention.
- President Ronald Reagan has not yet mentioned the word "AIDS" in public.

## 1983

*4,788 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 2,137 have died.*

- The CDC warns blood banks of a possible contamination of the blood supply with HIV.
- Dr. Luc Montagnier and his colleagues at the Pasteur Institute in France isolate what would later be known as the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV.
- The AIDS Medical Foundation (later the American Foundation for AIDS Research, or AMFAR) is founded in New York by Robert Mehl. Because of the government's painfully slow response to the disease, this group funds scientific and medical study of the disease as well as education programs.
- Reports of AIDS occurring in children raise false alarms that the illness could be casually transmitted, spurring some bus drivers in San Francisco to wear masks. Later in the year, scientists realize that children were acquiring the disease in the womb or during birth, though this does little to mitigate public fear.
- Outbreaks begin to appear in Britain, France, Australia and Africa; altogether, 33 countries have reported cases of the disease.
- The United States devotes only 1 percent of its health budget to fighting the epidemic; Reagan has still not explicitly acknowledged AIDS in public.

## 1984

*11,148 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 5,655 have died.*

- Among the deaths this year is a flight attendant believed to be "patient zero," the man who first brought AIDS to North America.
- All gay bathhouses in San Francisco are closed by the city's director of health, Dr. Mervyn Silverman.
- The U.S. Public Health Service announces there is no reason to believe AIDS can be transmitted from one person to another through saliva.
- Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler predicts, "There will be a vaccine in a very few years and a cure for AIDS before 1990."

- AIDS Action Council is founded. It would grow to be the largest organization solely dedicated to advocating on the federal assistance for HIV/AIDS care, treatment and research programs.
- Among the new platform planks adopted at the Democratic Convention is a call to increase funding and attention “to learn the cause and cure for AIDS, and to provide treatment for people with AIDS.”
- The Republican Party platform is silent on HIV/AIDS. Reagan has yet to speak the word “AIDS” in public.

## 1985

*23,174 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 12,652 have died.*

*A Los Angeles Times poll finds that 51 percent of those surveyed support a quarantine of AIDS patients, 48 percent approve of identity cards for people who test positive for HIV, and 15 percent support tattooing those with AIDS.*

- The Food and Drug Administration approves an AIDS diagnostic test developed by Dr. Robert Gallo.
- The World Health Organization provides a new clinical definition for AIDS that allows African nations to more accurately -- and more cheaply -- determine the numbers of infected citizens. Central Africa sees a surge in cases, where the illness goes by the name “slim disease,” referring to the effects of the illness on the body.
- The first International Conference on AIDS is held in Atlanta. Sponsored by the World Health Organization to coordinate all of the independent findings on AIDS research, it attracts 2,000 attendees from 26 countries. The European office of WHO follows up on this conference by establishing guidelines for fighting the disease in Europe.
- As it becomes clear that patients have been contracting AIDS through blood transfusions, the FDA institutes restrictions that prohibit gay or bisexual men from giving blood. Rather than focusing on whether or not prospective donors had practiced safe sex, the rules only consider with whom donors have had sex. If a donor reveals that he has had sexual contact with someone of the same sex even once since 1977, he is prohibited from donating blood or serum. This policy remains in effect today.
- Film star Rock Hudson dies of AIDS.
- Ryan White, a 13-year-old hemophiliac with AIDS, is barred from Western Middle School in Kokomo, Ind. Ignorance over the disease and how it is spread would continue to prevail in schools across the country for several years.

- Cases of AIDS have been reported in 51 countries.
- Incensed at findings that placed AIDS' origin on their continent, many central African nations refuse to report AIDS statistics to the World Health Organization or even allow researchers to enter their countries. Many deny that HIV is a problem within their borders, though many scientists at an International Conference on AIDS in Africa point to findings that indicate the disease is spreading at an alarming rate in central Africa.
- Still no public acknowledgment of the epidemic from Reagan.

## 1986

*42,546 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 24,806 have died.*

*A Gallup poll finds that two-thirds of American adults would permit their children to attend school with a student who had AIDS, while one-fourth would not.*

- Following several years of competing proposals, the term human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, becomes the standard name for the AIDS virus.
- The World Health Organization launches a global AIDS strategy that includes needle-exchange programs to reduce the spread of the virus among drug users. A number of African countries, including Namibia and Zambia, institute national HIV education programs, and the president of Zambia announces his son has AIDS.
- HIV-positive children are barred from schools, Reagan continues to publicly ignore the epidemic and growing public hysteria alienates the men, women, and children living with the disease. A small but vocal group -- HRCF among them -- is fighting to promote education about the disease and for the rights of those living with the disease.
- U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop releases a report on AIDS calling for comprehensive sex education.
- **In July, HRCF works in coalition with other groups to defeat efforts by then-Rep. John Dannemeyer, R-Calif., to gut a District of Columbia law that bars insurance firms from denying coverage to those testing HIV-positive. This is the first victorious roll call vote on Capitol Hill for the gay community.** Dannemeyer, who served from 1979 to 1992, argues for the quarantine of homosexuals to stop the spread of AIDS. He also claims that people with AIDS excrete viruses and that pregnant nurses should avoid them.

## 1987

*71,616 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 41,262 have died.*

*One in four Americans believes he or she can contract HIV by being sneezed or coughed upon by an infected person or by sharing a drinking glass. One out of 10 thinks he can get AIDS from working alongside someone who has it. And 40 percent of Americans are either somewhat or very concerned that they will contract AIDS, while just over half believe AIDS will eventually become an epidemic for the population at large.*

- Deaths by AIDS in 1987 include entertainer Liberace and Broadway director Michael Bennett.
- The World Health Organization estimates that up to 150,000 cases exist worldwide.
- **National Organizations Responding to AIDS (NORA) is convened by AIDS Action Council. HRCF is a founding member. The coalition grows to more than 175 diverse national organizations dedicated to advocating on behalf of the needs of men, women and children affected by HIV/AIDS.**
- Azidothymidine, or AZT, becomes the first anti-HIV drug approved by the FDA. The recommended dose is one 100 mg capsule every four hours *around the clock*. The annual cost of the drug is \$10,000, and side effects range from nausea and gastrointestinal problems to suppression of bone marrow and white blood cell production.
- The Immigration and Naturalization Service refuses entry to HIV-positive immigrants and visitors.
- In February, Cleve Jones stitches the first panel of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in San Francisco as a remembrance of his best friend, Marvin. This single section would grow into a 43,000-panel tribute to all those who have or have had HIV/AIDS. Contributors would include Rosa Parks; the quilt eventually tours the world.
- Britain's Princess Diana opens the first AIDS hospital ward in England. Her simple gesture of not wearing gloves while shaking hands with people living with AIDS is widely reported.
- The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) is founded in New York City. This organization would educate, march, speak and agitate over the years for greater access to treatment, cheaper drugs and more funding for research and care.
- For the first time -- six years and 40,000 deaths in the United States after the first signs of an epidemic -- President Reagan publicly uses the word "AIDS." He announces the creation of an AIDS advisory panel, ignoring the government's own experts in the Public

Health Service. This panel is criticized for its slow work and perceived bias, and suffers the resignation of both its leadership before it begins substantive work a half year later.

- The Federal AIDS Research, Information and Care Act is passed by the Senate and House. Introduced by Sens. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., and Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, it is the first comprehensive national response to AIDS. The bill budgets nearly \$1 billion to combat the disease, slating \$100 million for states to provide home and community-based care for people with AIDS and \$150 million for information and education. It also cuts drug research and approval time by half. During the 100th Congress, more than 40 bills pertaining to HIV/AIDS are introduced into the Senate alone. Many of these were bills to provide treatment for those affected by AIDS, but many sought to single out, alienate, and punish those living with the disease.
- June 1. HRCF holds a White House protest, demanding a “Manhattan Project on AIDS,” an all-out government attack on the disease and a search for a cure. The protest, held during the Third International Conference on AIDS, results in 64 arrests, including seven from HRCF.
- In October, Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., introduces an amendment to the CDC budget that bars AIDS prevention and educational materials that “promote or encourage, directly or indirectly ... homosexual sexual activities.” The amendment revokes health funding for states that fail to comply.
- In response, HRCF takes out ads in major newspapers lambasting Helms for “oppos[ing] the only known way to stop AIDS ... and he’s winning while more are dying.” Members of Congress subsequently receive thousands of phone calls and letters.
- When the budget bill emerges from the conference committee, the word “indirectly” is removed from Helms’ amendment, restricting funds only for educational material that “promotes or encourages directly homosexual sexual activity.” This is a modest but important victory in that gay organizations and community centers, under this small change, are able to receive federal funds to care for those living with AIDS
- In February, HRCF Executive Director Vic Basile testifies before the Presidential AIDS Commission, lamenting the failure of the government to recognize that “we are in the midst of a crisis.”

## 1988

*107,680 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 62,451 have died.*

*A survey conducted for Carter-Wallace Inc., the makers of Trojan Condoms, finds that “intellectually, single women are responding with a greater sense of urgency to the AIDS threat by assuming more responsibility in their sexual encounters. ... Men, on the other hand, still have to identify with the AIDS crisis as a real heterosexual threat, and a real behavioral change will not occur until they reach this realization.”*

- Ignoring the recommendations of his own AIDS commission, Reagan issues an order banning discrimination against federal workers with HIV.
- 107 million copies of “Understanding AIDS,” an educational report by Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, are distributed across the country. The White House calls such mailing campaigns ill-advised and a waste of time.
- New York City institutes a needle-exchange program.
- A world summit of ministers of health is held in London to strategize about AIDS prevention. Participants release the London Declaration on AIDS Prevention, emphasizing education, free exchange of information and experience, and the need to protect human rights and dignity -- a pointed reference to the hysteria-induced discrimination against people with AIDS found in a growing number of countries.
- The World Health Organization’s Global Program on AIDS institutes World AIDS Day as an annual event on Dec. 1.
- In California, Proposition 102 to ban anonymous HIV/AIDS testing is put on the ballot. Though expected to pass, the proposition fails by a margin of 2-1.

## 1989

*151,079 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 90,218 have died.*

*A Gallup poll finds widespread knowledge that HIV can be transmitted by sharing hypodermic needles (98 percent), by intimate sexual contact with a person of the same sex (96 percent) or the opposite sex (95 percent), and by receiving a blood transfusion (90 percent). Sixty-eight percent believe it is likely that AIDS will eventually become an epidemic for the population at large.*

*The same poll, however, finds that 44 percent believe that donating blood can cause infection, 16 percent think the virus can be transmitted through a drinking glass, 14 percent believe HIV can be caught from being coughed or sneezed upon by an infected*

*person, and 10 percent think they can contract AIDS from a toilet seat.*

- At least eight new drugs are authorized by the Food and Drug Administration for use in treatment of AIDS, including one new antiretroviral drug. Rather than attacking the symptoms, these drugs fight the virus itself.
- The Rev. Jerry Falwell says AIDS is spreading because gays "cannot have children of their own, so the only way for them to strengthen their numbers is to introduce innocent and susceptible young people into their deviant sexual dens of iniquity."
- The Food and Drug Administration announces new regulations that "fast track" the availability of new AIDS medications. As part of the announcement, manufacturers of the latest antiretroviral drug approved for wide use, distribute the medicine free to physicians with patients for whom AZT is toxic.
- Dr. Jonathan Mann, head of the WHO AIDS program, complains that some preventive measures have come too late and that some countries, particularly the United States and Britain, are obstructing research on prevention by refusing to candidly investigate the sexual factors that may contribute to the spread of the disease in their populations. Specifically, anti-gay congressional pressure on the NIH was preventing it from studying human sexual behavior with respect to AIDS.

## 1990

*200,525 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 121,952 have died.*

*Six of 10 adult New Yorkers approve of Schools Chancellor Joseph A. Fernandez's plan to distribute condoms to high school students as an AIDS prevention measure, according to The New York Poll. Sixty percent of New Yorkers between the ages of 18 and 29 favor the plan, while those 50 and older are largely opposed.*

*One in eight adults in the United States personally knows someone with AIDS. Nevertheless, a majority of U.S. citizens agree with the statement, "In general, it's people's own fault if they get AIDS."*

*A total of 43 percent of adult Americans believe that "sometimes AIDS is punishment for the decline in moral standards." More than half (54 percent) of adults believe that people infected with the AIDS virus should be made to carry a card to that effect, while 21 percent believe that people with AIDS should be isolated from the rest of society. Twenty-five percent of adult U.S. citizens report that they would refuse to work alongside someone with AIDS. This figure is higher than comparable figures for most of Europe.*

- Despite the fact that 60 percent of New York’s IV drug users are HIV-positive, the city’s needle-exchange program is dismantled for political reasons. Black leaders label the program genocidal, claiming it threatens minority communities by encouraging drug use. A bill to institute needle exchanges in California is defeated for similar reasons. The Bush administration opposes the idea nationally, saying there is too little evidence that such programs work.
- The World Health Organization estimates there are nearly 9 million people with HIV around the globe and 1 million cases of AIDS.
- In some places, the programs survive. Portland, Ore., Honolulu and Vancouver, Wash., have created needle-exchange programs, following the lead of Tacoma, Wash., the first U.S. city to do so.
- In May, Rep. Jim Chapman, D-Texas, offers an amendment to the Americans with Disabilities Act allowing employers to discriminate against workers with AIDS and HIV infection in food-handling positions. While HRCF and others oppose the amendment on the grounds that it unnecessarily feeds public hysteria over the disease and further victimizes AIDS patients where the risk of transmission is virtually zero, it passes 199-187.
- July 12. When the ADA is altered in a conference committee to remove the amendment, attempts are made to add the language back. HRCF successfully opposes this and the conference committee reports out a bill that defines disability as including people with HIV or AIDS, thereby protecting them from discrimination. President George H.W. Bush signs the measure into law.
- In July, Rep. John Dannemeyer, R-Calif., proposes an amendment to the AIDS Prevention Act that would require states to report names of people who test HIV-positive.
- HRCF lobbies hard against this motion, and eventually Reps. Roy Rowland, D-Ga., and Henry Waxman, D-Calif., offer an HRCF-supported amendment blocking it. This amendment passes, 312-113.
- Aug. 18. The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act is signed by President Bush. The measure is named after Ryan White, the teen-ager from Indiana who became an active public educator on HIV/AIDS after contracting the disease via treatments for hemophilia and being barred from school.
- The Act funds projects that serve low-income, uninsured and under-insured individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS.
- White dies of AIDS at age 19, four months before the bill is enacted.

- The Ryan White CARE Act is the largest authorization of federal funds specifically designated to provide health and social services to people infected with HIV. Grants are targeted to local authorities and consortiums of health care providers to render services for HIV-positive individuals and local communities that must deal with their own unique circumstances of the epidemic.
- Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop accuses his successor, Dr. Antonia Novello, of downplaying the AIDS epidemic. He argues that the Bush administration is not doing enough to educate and inform the public about the disease.

## 1991

*260,997 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 158,912 have died.*

- Kimberly Bergalis, of Fort Pierce, Fla., who was infected with HIV by her dentist, Dr. David Acer, testifies before Congress and writes the American Medical Association requesting mandatory testing of all health care workers.
- **July 18. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., offers an amendment to provide a \$10,000 fine and a prison term of not less than 10 years for health care providers who know they have HIV and perform invasive medical procedures without notifying patients. The Human Rights Campaign Fund opposes this measure. It passes 81-18 in the Senate, but fails to get out of committee in the House.**
- July 25. Dannemeyer attempts to prohibit all survey research on human sexual behavior that had been proposed by NIH to combat the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. A vote supported by HRCF blocks this amendment, 283-137. Dannemeyer then tries to cut funding for the NIH that includes research in breast cancer and HIV/AIDS.
- In October, Helms offers an amendment to allow health care professionals to test patients for HIV before invasive medical procedures without the permission of the patient. The amendment passes the Senate by a vote of 55-44, but fails in the House.
- Magic Johnson announces he is HIV-positive and retires from professional basketball. Johnson becomes a spokesman for AIDS awareness and safe sex. As the first high-profile straight role model to go public with his diagnosis, Johnson begins to remove the stigma from AIDS; it is no longer viewed only as a gay white male disease.
- Freddie Mercury, lead singer of the rock group Queen, reveals that he has AIDS. Within hours of his announcement, Mercury dies.

## 1992

*339,527 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 199,567 have died.*

- Arthur Ashe, tennis star and civil rights champion, announces that he contracted HIV from a blood transfusion a decade earlier.
- **The Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS program is created, with a budget of approximately \$50 million. Over the next seven years, the program grows to \$257 million annually, allowing communities to help those living with AIDS attain affordable housing while they receive treatment. HRCF continues to fight for increases in budget and jurisdiction for this program.**
- Accelerated approval of drugs at the Food and Drug Administration is established, in large part due to pressure from the AIDS activist community.
- Combination drug treatments begin and show signs of success, compared with earlier antiretroviral drugs that, when used alone, were effective for an average of one year after the onset of AIDS.
- **HRCF supports a House effort to shift funds in its version of the budget from defense to domestic spending that includes spending on breast cancer and HIV/AIDS research. The bill is defeated 187-238.**
- Planners decide to hold the 1992 international AIDS conference in Amsterdam rather than Boston because of outrage over the United States' policy requiring short-term visitors to declare their HIV infection status.
- **Aug. 6. HRCF Board Co-Chair Randy Klose dies from AIDS-related causes.**

## 1993

*419,279 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 244,838 have died.*

- June 25. President Clinton names Kristine Gebbie as the United States' first AIDS policy coordinator.
- Rudolf Nureyev, Russian ballet star, and Arthur Ashe die of AIDS.
- Surveys show marked improvement in public awareness of the epidemic: a third of all Americans know someone with HIV/AIDS or someone who has died from AIDS, and half of all adults say they have personally taken steps or altered their lifestyle to avoid contracting HIV.

- Yet it is reported that “61 per cent of single men who had sex in the past four weeks said that they had not used a condom -- even though the majority of them believe that sex with a HIV carrier is more dangerous than Russian roulette.”
- The FDA approves the “female condom” but refuses to allow it to be tested for anal sex on the grounds that sodomy is illegal in many states.
- Feb. 4. Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla., introduces an amendment to codify the Department of Health and Human Services’ prohibition of the permanent immigration of HIV-positive individuals. The amendment passes, 76-23. HRCF opposes this amendment for unfairly preventing people from immigrating to the United States, where they might be able to receive high-quality treatment.
- \$5.5 billion is authorized for research by the National Institutes of Health. Major portions are targeted to breast cancer and HIV/AIDS research, including funding for a new office of AIDS research to coordinate national efforts to find a cure for AIDS. HRCF and its allies fight for increases in research dollars and supports the bill, which passes 93-4.
- AZT is found by European researchers to be ineffective when taken by HIV-positive people who have not contracted AIDS.
- March 11. The Project Aries HIV phone counseling program, designed to encourage safe sex and research HIV transmission in rural areas, loses all federal funding, despite HRCF’s lobbying to protect it. The project began as a pilot program at the University of Washington in Seattle, later growing to national scale. The anonymity of the phone counseling service encouraged people to seek help, particularly those who were too embarrassed, who lived in isolated areas, or those with limited educational resources available.
- Aug. 4. HRCF founder Steve Endean dies of AIDS-related causes.

## 1994

*491,763 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 294,515 have died.*

- The CDC reports that AIDS is the leading cause of death among Americans ages 25 to 44.
- AZT is found to reduce by two-thirds the possibility of prenatal transmission of HIV from mothers to babies.
- Facing pressure from AIDS activists like the National Association of People With AIDS and ACT UP, Kristine Gebbie resigns as head of the Office of National AIDS Policy. President Clinton appoints Patsy Fleming to take her place. AIDS activists also demand

that the president increase the scope and authority of the office by making it a Cabinet position. Clinton does not give the position Cabinet status, but ensures it direct access to himself and the Cabinet, giving the office, in his words "a real chance to influence me and my decisions."

- President Clinton grants a temporary waiver of the U.S. policy prohibiting people with HIV from entering the country in order to allow HIV-positive athletes to compete in the fourth annual Gay Games in New York. This is the first time the regulations have been suspended.

## 1995

*560,935 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 344,507 have died.*

- **July 19. AIDS training for federal workers is ended, despite HRC's and others' efforts to save it.**
- The era of the "AIDS cocktail" is born as a new clinical trial of combination antiretroviral therapy yields encouraging results. AZT taken with other drugs is found significantly more effective than AZT alone.
- The World Health Organization's AIDS program is replaced by the United Nations Joint Program on AIDS (UNAIDS).
- **July 27. During the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act, Sen. Jesse Helms offers and the Senate passes an amendment that would cut off funding to local gay community health centers that provide care to men, women and children with HIV and AIDS. HRC opposes this amendment and helps to defeat it in conference committee, with the aid of Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan.**
- President Clinton issues an executive order establishing a 35-member Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. This council provides advice, information and recommendations to the secretary of health and human services in all areas of the federal government that provide prevention, research and care for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- **The National Organizations Responding to AIDS (NORA) executive committee is founded with the help of HRC to better articulate consensus within the coalition. Since then, HRC has held a seat on this committee; Winnie Stachelberg was the first to serve, from 1995-1997, followed by Seth Kilbourn, 1997-2000. Currently, HRC Senior Policy Advocate Christopher Labonte serves on the NORA executive committee.**

## 1996

*620,767 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 381,437 have died.*

*A number of polls reveal widespread support for school AIDS education programs (95 percent), needle exchanges for drug users (66 percent), and condom advertisements (70 percent). Forty-six percent favor making condoms available in schools, while 49 percent favor only safe-sex education without making condoms accessible on school grounds. Two-thirds of those polled believe AIDS prevention education should occur before age 12.*

- Rep. Bob Dornan, R-Calif., attaches an amendment to the Department of Defense authorization bill mandating the discharge of all HIV-positive service members. Despite efforts by HRC and other NORA coalition members, it passes, and Clinton signs the overall authorization bill.
- For the first time since the beginning of the epidemic, annual estimated AIDS incidence drops -- by 6 percent -- and deaths decline by 25 percent. New HIV infections, however, remain steady at approximately 40,000 per year.
- Researchers warn that press coverage of HIV/AIDS is becoming more superficial and increasingly concealed in the back sections of newspapers. They warn that this could lead to a decrease in public awareness.
- Oct. 11-13. The entire AIDS Memorial Quilt is displayed in Washington, filling the National Mall from the Capitol to the Washington Monument. Name-reading ceremonies are held around the clock. Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper, take part.
- May 20. The Ryan White CARE Act is reauthorized for another five years. Introduced by Sens. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., and Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., in 1995, the bill sparks contentious debate. HRC lobbies intensely for funding increases and other expansions during ferocious funding-formula battles, beating back three attempts by Sen. Jesse Helms to tack on amendments to gut it. One amendment would have banned Ryan White funding from going to any gay organization. Funding for fiscal year 1996 is \$738 million, an increase of 16 percent over the previous year. A total of \$52 million is devoted expressly to new AIDS drugs. Direct assistance to cities increases from 16 communities in 1990 to 51 communities in 2000.
- The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative is established. Vaccine research had taken a back seat to AIDS/HIV treatment simply because the care of those afflicted with AIDS was much more urgent, though not more important.

- Magic Johnson returns to professional basketball. Though Johnson played brilliantly on the U.S. basketball's 1992 Olympic team, his initial attempt to return following the Olympics had been met with strong opposition from other players who refused to play alongside him -- particularly after Johnson was cut during a game -- and the comeback crumbled quickly. This time, however, opposition is muted and the star's return is hailed as the beginning of a new era of sensitivity and AIDS awareness.
- One month later, heavyweight boxer Tommy Morrison is identified as HIV-positive before a fight, and as a result he is barred from rings everywhere.
- **June 26. Congress defeats a proposed \$15 million increase in the Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS program. HRC supported this increase. This is the first time HOPWA does not see growth in its budget. HOPWA provides local assistance via HUD to individuals and families that must deal with the often prohibitive cost of treatment of AIDS, and who require stable housing in order to access the treatments and services they need to stay alive.**
- **HRC leads the fight to repeal the Dornan amendment to discharge HIV-positive servicemembers. Working in coalition with groups such as the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network and the Paralyzed Veterans Association, the repeal is introduced by Sens. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., and William Cohen, R-Maine. It passes in time to prevent the discharge of the 1,049 HIV-positive servicemembers.**
- **Feb. 26. President Clinton signs legislation repealing the Dornan measure.**
- UNAIDS reports that the number of new HIV infections had declined in some countries due to safer sex practices, although the worldwide rate of infections continues to grow rapidly. Countries that report a slowing of the epidemic include the United States, Australia, New Zealand, northern European countries and parts of sub-Saharan Africa.
- The first AIDS hospice founded in San Francisco closes because fewer people are dying of AIDS as a result of the new treatments.

## 1997

*668,206 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 402,382 have died.*

- African-American males now make up 47 percent of those newly diagnosed with HIV, although they are approximately 7 percent of the population at large. Latino men account for 20 percent of new infections in the United States.
- UNAIDS reports that the global HIV epidemic is far worse than had previously been thought. Updated surveillance techniques suggested that 30 million people are now living with HIV/AIDS and 16,000 new infections are occurring every day.
- Worldwide, one in 100 people between ages 15 and 49 is estimated to be HIV-positive, according to the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases. Only one in 10 infected people is thought to be aware of his or her infection. It is estimated that by the year 2000, there will be 40 million people living with AIDS in the world.
- Worldwide, 2.3 million people are thought to have died from AIDS, an increase of 50 percent over 1996 levels. Of these, 460,000 are in children under 15. UNAIDS reports that the world has not yet seen the full impact of the epidemic.
- President Clinton appoints Sandra Thurman to the Office of National AIDS Policy. The new “AIDS czar” pledges to “work to counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and that racism continue to have on this epidemic.”
- The CDC is providing assistance to 65 state, local and territorial health departments in implementing HIV prevention programs. These comprehensive prevention programs include counseling, testing, referral, information programs, quality insurance, health education, risk reduction, evaluation activities and capacity- building activities. Nearly \$253 million is distributed throughout the states and territories, and \$18 million is targeted for local communities in 56 high-risk metropolitan areas. Further, national and regional minority organizations are given \$9 million to combat the epidemic among the increasingly vulnerable communities of color.
- President Clinton challenges the country to develop a vaccine by 2007, declaring: "If the 21st century is to be the century of biology, let us make an AIDS vaccine its first great triumph." Approximately \$148 million is earmarked for vaccine development for the next fiscal year, up \$17 million from fiscal 1997, though this falls far behind the allotment for education and treatment.

## 1998

*706,793 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 418,814 have died.*

*Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, find a general erosion of public knowledge since 1991 on the difficulty of casual transmission of HIV. Nearly 30 percent of those polled believe individuals who have contracted AIDS got what they deserved, compared with 20 percent in 1991.*

- AIDS is the leading cause of death among African-American men and the second leading cause of death among women between the ages of 25 and 44, according to NORA. Women now account for 20 percent of AIDS cases, having risen 60 percent between 1990 and 1995. AIDS is the fifth leading cause of death among all Americans between the ages of 25 and 44.
- Pediatric AIDS cases due to mother-child transmission, meanwhile, have fallen 55 percent over the past four years thanks to the use of AZT among pregnant and nursing mothers.
- VaxGen launches the world's first final-stage trial of an HIV vaccine.
- **Feb. 10. Dr. David Satcher is nominated to be surgeon general. HRC fights successfully for Satcher's confirmation because of his forward-thinking stance on AIDS care and prevention, including his support for needle exchange, and his experience gained from his tenure as director of the CDC.**
- **HRC, joining other AIDS organizations, fights a disturbing trend to ban needle-exchange programs. On April 29, the House passes a ban on federal funding for needle-exchange programs. In ignoring the recommendations of surgeons general, the World Health Organization, and countless health professionals, the House politicizes this form of AIDS prevention -- shown to have no effect on incidence of drug use itself -- at the expense of positive public health measures.**
- **HOPWA is attacked again when the House passes an amendment to cut the program by \$21 million. HRC and other organizations fight back, resulting in a \$20 million increase for the next fiscal year.**

## 1999

*733,374 people have been diagnosed in the United States. 430,441 have died.*

*National groups warn that there is a growing danger of complacency about HIV/AIDS transmission. Whereas in 1990, some 96 percent of Americans knew blood transfusion and unprotected sex were means of transmission, results from a 1999 study by the CDC are less encouraging. One in five Americans believes those infected with HIV get what they deserve, though among younger Americans this is lower. In addition, 40 percent think HIV can be spread by sharing a drinking glass with an infected person, although some acknowledged that was "somewhat unlikely." Also, 41 percent say HIV could be transmitted through coughing or sneezing.*

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes the steady decrease of AIDS incidence among men who have sex with men, down from 43 percent of people with AIDS in 1995 to 33 percent in 1999. However, heterosexual transmission rates climbing 4 percentage points in the same period, to 16 percent. Deaths among infected IV drug users also increases, from 35 percent in 1998 to 36 percent in 1999.
- Sept. 8. The House passes an amendment, 212-207, restoring \$10 million that had been cut from HOPWA.
- Sept. 14. The House passes an amendment introduced by Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind., that bars locally raised funds in Washington, D.C., from being used to operate needle-exchange programs. This amendment effectively prohibits publicly funded needle exchanges in the city, since federal funding for such programs has previously been prohibited as well.

## 2000

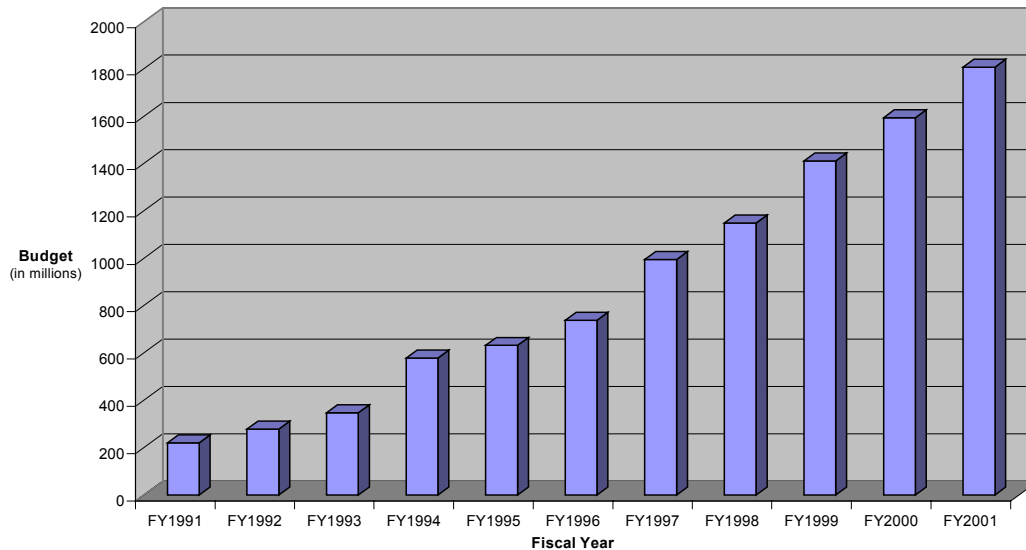
*An MTV/Kaiser Family Foundation study finds that an overwhelming majority of Americans age 18 to 24 support sex education and promoting the use of contraceptives among youth. They also place the development of an AIDS vaccine as a top priority in the fight against HIV.*

*Another Kaiser Family Foundation poll reports that 60 percent of Americans favor increasing funding for HIV prevention programs in Africa, though they are evenly divided over whether it will lead to substantive results.*

- Oct 20. President Clinton signs the Ryan White CARE Act reauthorization, which totals \$1.6 billion. The law includes new language that doubles the base award for

states, from \$100,000 to \$200,000, for states with 90 or fewer AIDS cases and from \$250,000, to \$500,000 for states with 90 or more AIDS cases.

### Total CARE Act Funding FY1991-FY2001



- A supplemental funding stream is created for emerging communities, urban areas within states that are not eligible metropolitan areas yet have between 500 and 1,999 AIDS cases reported to the CDC over the past five years. Under this new supplementary funding, states with severe need are now eligible for additional grants. Grants are directly available to community health providers and other non-profit or public organizations, providing early treatment for historically under-served populations and neglected areas. Health providers serving predominantly women and children are also targeted, as are programs that reduce perinatal transmission.
- In its National Intelligence Estimate, the CIA predicts some countries' gross domestic products will be reduced by 20 percent as a result of the AIDS epidemic.
- In a 7-6 vote, the FDA's blood products advisory committee upholds the ban on blood donation by gay or bisexual men. Groups opposing the ban include the Red Cross, physicians, pharmaceutical companies, and Blood Centers of the Pacific. Blood donation advocates point to the fact that only 5 percent of eligible donors give blood each year, and that the number of donors decreases by 1 percent annually as the demand grows by 1 percent. Still, people fear that allowing gay men to donate blood -- regardless of safe sex practices -- is too great a risk.

## 2001

*Half of those newly infected with HIV are youths between the ages of 13 and 24. Among young people between the ages of 13 and 19, teen-age girls account for 58 percent of new cases, African- American teens represent 60 percent of new cases, and Latino teens represent 24 percent of new cases.*

- UNAIDS estimates 53 million people worldwide have contracted HIV/AIDS. The number may rise to 100 million in as little as five years. A total of 17 million have died so far.
- After media reports that the White House intends to abolish the National Office of AIDS policy, HRC and many other AIDS advocacy groups urge President George W. Bush to reconsider. He does, and appoints Scott Evertz to head it, the first openly gay man appointed to run the AIDS office.
- The president and his Cabinet declare that the AIDS crisis is one of their top priorities at home and abroad. Secretary of State Colin Powell warns that "Nations will collapse if we don't fix these problems."
- The Worldwatch Institute and the African Development Forum warn that within the next decade, there will be 40 million AIDS orphans.
- New vaccines that thwart the HIV virus' ability to enter cells and that may mitigate its ability to mutate are in the pipeline to undergo clinical trials by 2002.
- Though death rates have declined by two-thirds over the last decade, new infections have leveled off at a steady 40,000 per year. Half of these are young people under the age of 25.
- **HOPWA receives a 12 percent increase for FY 2001, bringing the total budget for the program to \$260 million.**
- U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan announces he will create an international AIDS fund totaling \$7 billion to \$10 billion from public and private donations. The first to announce a contribution is the United States, pledging \$200 million. Several activist groups, including ACT UP, argue this is not sufficient.
- On the eve of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first case of AIDS, the epidemic continues to rage. The CDC announces that young gay men are contracting the AIDS virus at a rate not seen in more than a decade. Experts believe that treatments have falsely led young people to believe that HIV infection is manageable. Further, young gay men have no memory of losing loved ones during the early years of the epidemic.

## HRC SENIOR STAFF IN APPRECIATION

Elizabeth Birch  
*Executive Director*

The Human Rights Campaign acknowledges the dedication and determination from the countless individuals and organizations that have worked tirelessly on behalf of those living with HIV and AIDS. Among those at the Human Rights Campaign who have worked in HIV and AIDS policy and deserve special recognition are – Tim McFeeley, Vic Basile, Steve Endean, Randy Klose, Steve Smith, Carlton Lee, Eric Rosenthal, Winnie Stachelberg, Seth Kilbourn, Barbara Menard and Christopher Labonte.

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As American's largest gay and lesbian organization, the Human Rights Campaign provides a national voice on gay and lesbian issues. The Human Rights Campaign effectively lobbies Congress; mobilizes grassroots action in diverse communities; invests strategically to elect a fair-minded Congress; and increases public understanding through innovative education and communication strategies.

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HRC is a bipartisan organization that works to advance equality based on sexual orientation and gender expression and identity, to ensure that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.

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