

Anti-AIDS drug finally available ddi released, but access is restricted

Due to the activism of Eva, the mother of a person living with AIDS, and AIDS ACTION NOW!, the federal government and Bristol Myers announced that DDI *would* be released under the EDRP—but with a number of conditions. On September 28, an announcement was made about the release to people intolerant to AZT at a daily dose of 600 milligrams or less. Each case was to be reviewed on an individual basis.

The mass media immediately took this as a complete victory for those who were fighting for the drug's release. However, many questions still need to be answered. Determining exactly who is eligible is quite confusing and complicated. A summary given to AIDS ACTION NOW! (AAN) by the Health

and Welfare Department states that, "Following pressure by the AIDS community, the manufacturer of DDI, Bristol-Myers made a public commitment in July to provide certain access to DDI in Canada and the U.S. in September. Efforts to ensure access is equivalent have been made due to limited supplies of the drug." It is not clear why they, knowing of the release for months beforehand, did not have a sufficient supply ready.

They go on to say that priority will be given to patients who develop side effects to AZT over those who show deterioration despite AZT therapy. To show their compassion, Bristol-Myers is going to give DDI free of charge to those who qualify.

EDRP, the company gets to decide who is eligible. Generally, if a treatment has shown promise and a doctor applied for it through EDRP, it was given to the PLWA/HIV-positive person. Now that the government has compromised the meaning of the program, how many other situations will come up where drug companies will be able to, in effect, hold people with HIV or AIDS hostage? AAN feels that if a person, and his or her doctor, thinks that a treatment may be beneficial to that person's health, the treatment must be made available to them.

HIV-positive with a CD4+ cell count less than 200 or has a diagnosis of AIDS.

2) Became intolerant to AZT therapy and, in spite of dose reduction to 600mg or less, remained intolerant to the drug as defined by any one of the following: a) a decrease in haemoglobin at a rate of at least 2gm./month; b) a decrease in the neutrophil count to less than 750/mm recurring with at least one rechallenge with AZT.

work they may be eligible for DDI. A victory for people like Eva's son (who have no other options) is indeed an important step, but it is obvious that questions such as the right of each individual to choose treatment are being threatened. Does this set a precedent as to how the EDRP will now be used? When trials begin in November will those not in Vancouver, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, or Calgary be able to obtain DDI? Only time will answer these questions.

Brent Southin

"Equality Day" masks discrimination Second rights complaint against Toronto mayor

TORONTO—Mayor Art Eggleton is in hot water with the lesbian and gay communities *again*.

Eggleton proclaimed October 3 "Lesbian and Gay Community Charity Appeal Day" but the manner in which he did so has resulted in a second charge of discrimination before the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). The first charge focuses on the mayor's adamant refusal to proclaim Lesbian and Gay Pride Day for the last five years.

The Appeal Day announcement is viewed with suspicion even by the Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal (LCCA) which applied for it.

Not only was the name changed to include "charity," but the focus of the proclamation was on AIDS-related grants. Richard McLellan, an Appeal board member, pointed out that only three of the 120 organizations and individuals funded by LCCA work in the AIDS field, and

accused Eggleton of "once again painting the lesbian and gay community as an AIDS community."

McLellan has filed a complaint with the OHRC alleging discrimination over the way in which the application was handled.

The application was filed August 8. But the two days originally requested—September 9 as a starter for the Appeal fund drive, or September 18 as the beginning of Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal Week—went by before the mayor produced a decision.

McLellan said that when he followed the regular application procedure, he did not identify the Appeal by name, nor specify the organization's gay and lesbian constituency. Initially, he was assured by Sandra Cowan, Acting Director of Protocol and Civic Events, that everything would be fine. But when he divulged the group's name, he was told to apply directly to Eggleton, on the grounds that the



We say "Hats off to Pride Day favourites Dykes on Bikes." Toronto's mayor Art Eggleton says, "No Way!"

"issue" was before the OHRC. McLellan, angered by Cowan's lumping together of the requests by

Open gay US congress member controversy Frank attacked by mass media

Barney Frank, openly gay progressive member of the U.S. Congress, has been the victim of countless media attacks in the American press, following the publication of "revelations" of his involvement with a sex trade worker, on the front page of the *Washington Times* on August 25.

Apparently, Frank answered a personal ad in the *Blade*, Washington's lesbian and gay weekly, placed by Steven Gobie. He subsequently hired Gobie as a driver and personal assistant for two years. As well, Frank paid Gobie for sex several times. According to Gobie, Frank was aware that he, Gobie, was operating a prostitution ring out of Frank's Washington apartment. Frank denies that he was aware of this, and states that he



Frank paid sex trade worker for sex, calls for ethics investigation

Kicked Gobie out when he became aware of what was happening. A Washington lawyer has de-

manded that Frank be prosecuted on sodomy charges, and right-wing Republicans have been demanding his resignation. Frank himself has called for an ethics investigation into the case, and has opted for a strategy of total openness, winning the unanimous support of the lesbian and gay groups and media in the U.S. It is doubtful that much harm will come to Frank because of press gossip-mongering and dubious "ethical inquiries." According to one Washington source, if all members of Congress were subjected to as intense a scrutiny as that which has been accorded to Barney Frank, the entire government would be incapacitated (and incarcerated?).

Shawn Syms

two distinct groups—the Appeal and the Lesbian and Gay Pride Day Committee (LCPDC)—argues that the focus on the lesbian and gay character of the two applications is evidence of systemic discrimination.

"It was just so clear that had we been any other kind of name, there would have been no problem. We wouldn't have even had to go to the mayor," he declared.

It appears obvious to many local lesbian and gay activists that Eggleton's proclamation of Appeal Day is part of a three-pronged effort to get off the hook of the Pride Day issue.

Instead of proclaiming Pride Day, Eggleton has pushed the idea of an "Equality Day" on January 31, purported to focus on discrimination against sexual orientation. Peter Maloney, chair of the day, and a member of the mayor's Community and Race Relations Committee (as well as a gay lawyer and Eggleton's fellow Liberal of Eggleton) has urged lesbian and gay organizations to support Equality Day. But both LGPD and

the Appeal will boycott the day, having formed with other activists the "Already Equal Committee."

Richard McLellan denounced the day: "It's a cop-out and an attempt to cover over some of the systemic discrimination in this city. Declaring Equality Day is like not seeking court costs on Pride Day. (Eggleton recently voted with city council to cover the \$6,000 that gay activist Kyle Rae incurred in the court case against the mayor.) The mayor thinks that if he appears to be backing down, he'll look nice."

Alexandra Henriques, the only member of the mayor's committee to oppose Equality Day, said, "The mayor offers Equality Day as a carrot. It's on his terms. It's like a form of blackmail."

John Wilson (Based on articles in NOW and Xtra).