AIDS ACTION
COMMITTEE
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"Most of the million or more Americans infected with the AIDS virus can benefit from taking the drug AZT."
-- ***The New York Times***
Front page headline, August 19, 1989

Dear Friend,

Your help is urgently needed to ensure that the fight against AIDS does not lose its power at this critical moment.

I feel strongly that you must be alert to a new danger that lies with the much-lauded recent headlines suggesting that zidovudine (AZT) "works."

You see, the news of "breakthrough" results with AZT in clinical trials could actually devastate some of the hard-earned progress that we have won in the fight against AIDS.

The fact is that AZT does not cure AIDS. It may slow the progression of symptoms to some degree, but it is not a "magic bullet." And some people are AZT-resistant; others hit its efficacy limit after two years.

I am desperately afraid that optimism about AZT will mistakenly lead us all to relax our prevention efforts. I am afraid, for all of us, that urgent educational programs will now be abandoned. And that we may face an even more terrible crisis than ever in who funds AIDS care and who has access to it.

In the distant world of research, the positive performance of AZT in clinical trials means the dawn of the possibility that AIDS could become a treatable, rather than a fatal, disease.

But here and now, for the 819 people with AIDS who are AIDS Action's clients as of today, AZT won't change their difficult lives. And here are some other facts that AZT won't change:

- Nearly 62,000 AIDS deaths have been tallied, about 4,000 more than in the Vietnam War.
- Every day, about 120 Americans are known to die of AIDS, one death every 12 minutes.
- In the coming year, despite last week's headlines, at least as many people will be diagnosed with AIDS as were in the past year. By some projections, the count of 100,000 people diagnosed to date with HIV, the AIDS virus, is feared to double in the next 15 months alone.
- The Public Health Service forecasts that by 1992 365,000 Americans will have been diagnosed with AIDS, and that 263,000 of them will have died.

(please turn ...)