

NATIONAL NEWS

AIDS CZAR OR COURT JESTER?



Or Grand Marshall of the Smokescreen Parade? Whatever she is, Kristine Gebbie is no friend of people with AIDS. When ACT UP began waging a fight

for an AIDS czar many months ago, we had something slightly different in mind from President Clinton's concept — specifically, a coordinator in fighting AIDS, not people with AIDS. While thousands of people were dying from AIDS this year, Clinton twiddled his thumbs for almost six months before announcing an AIDS czar or an AIDS plan. His plan, such as it is, amounts to keeping AIDS

under the control of the NIH, which has never found a cure for any major epidemic. And the czar

Kristine Gebbie's AIDS background is not at all impressive. In fact, she is quite capable of doing very little. For instance, when the Washington State Legislature eliminated the Insurance Continuation Program, she did nothing. She has done nothing to fight for needle exchange, nor for condoms in schools, nor to oppose mandatory testing. What has she done? She supported a measure by the Washington State Board of Health to force laboratories to disclose the names of people with T-cell counts under 200 so the Board could compile a list; her Health Department tried to institute a process in the Washington Administrative Code to detain people with HIV; she spurred five of her employees into complaining to the Washington Human Rights Commission, on the basis of pay discrepancies, dismissals, and a working atmosphere reminiscent of the "Old

South," according to the *Daily Olympian*, and she was a principal architect of Oregon's Health Care Rationing Plan, allowing people with certain afflictions to only get "comfort care" — thus pitting health care constituency groups against one another and in effect creating mandatory euthanasia for people living with "low-priority" diseases.

AIDS activists have been fighting Gebbie at every turn. They managed to get the Washington State Board of Health to allow anonymous testing for T-cell counts, and they got the Governor's Advisory council to reject discussing the internment proposal.

Unfortunately, Washington State does now have a Health Care Rationing Plan. We pray it's not a preview of Clinton's "managed competition" as a federal health care strategy. ▲

- Tavis Barr

Q. What Boston-based AIDS service organization has an \$8 million budget but is reportedly offering only limited client services to People with AIDS?

A. If you answered AIDS Action Committee (AAC), then listen up! PWA's and others who deal with AAC from a PWA perspective (such as visiting nurses) are seeking serious answers from AAC regarding the current state of their Client Services. If you'd like to contribute to this critique, then please contact the Boston PWA Coalition ☎ 617-266-6422.

A note to our subscribers

Please check your address label. If there's anything wrong with it, contact me. Also, some of you in the Boston area have FightBack™ labels. These have the names and numbers of your elected officials. Call them to verify that they are yours.

Robert ☎ (617) 426-7484.

ACT UP Boston meets every Tuesday in the Boston Living Center
Clarendon St., 7th floor.

☎ 617-49-ACTUP

General Meeting: 7-8 pm. Working Groups: 8-9 pm. Near Back Bay on the Orange Line; Arlington or Copley on the Green Line. In YWCA across from Hard Rock Café.



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