

New Leader to Head Vermont CARES

BY PAUL OLSEN

BURLINGTON – Vermont's largest and oldest AIDS services organization, Vermont CARES, has a new leader. David Hooks recently took over as Executive Director of the agency and his tenure marks the first time an openly HIV positive person has led the 15-year-old organization.

At a press conference introducing Hooks, Vermont CARES Board Chairman Joseph Boisse said that the nationwide search for a new Executive Director resulted in the hiring of a Vermonter. "Over the past many months we went through an intensive search process, with national advertising, and we ended up finding the diamond in our own backyard," he said of Hooks, who lives in Pittsfield Vermont.

Hooks, 46, is an attorney who has previously worked in public relations and the financial services industry and served on the Vermont CARES board of directors for 2 years. He replaces Tim Palmer who served as the Executive Director of Vermont CARES for 5 1/2 years.

"I look upon my new role at CARES as an evolution of my commitment to the agency and its mission and the struggle against all the lingering myths, misinformation, barriers and

stigma that twenty years into this battle still surround individuals living with HIV," Hooks said at a July 26 press conference marking his formal introduction as Executive Director. "As a past Vermont CARES board member and as a volunteer in the Rutland area, I've had the opportunity to be involved in the agency's work from a range of perspectives. I'm fortunate in that I am able to bring these experiences to my new role from day one."

Hooks outlined two key initiatives – oral HIV testing and a return to work program – that he plans to pursue as the leader of Vermont CARES. "Oral HIV testing breaks down many barriers to getting tested," he said and "as more individuals see improvements in their health and are able to return to work, it is our duty to assist them in getting the skills and confidence necessary to do so."

As an HIV positive man, Hooks does not minimize the significance of his HIV status in his new role as Executive Director. In fact, he believes it may help him do a better job. "I hope that this will allow me to bring a new perspective to the work," he said. "Working with the staff on a daily basis and being HIV positive is totally different in terms of the personal experiences that I bring to the job. During the

interview process I met with a group of peers from the agency and they expressed appreciation for the fact that Vermont CARES would give this opportunity to a peer of the agency."

Representatives of the Vermont Health Department welcomed Hooks to his new role and expressed enthusiasm about working together in fighting HIV in Vermont. "Vermont CARES is a very important part of our response to the epidemic in Vermont," said Guy Weston, Vermont's HIV/AIDS Program Director. "We're looking forward to a long and collaborative relationship as we continue to formulate strategies to challenge this disease that has challenged us."

Established in 1986, the Vermont Committee for AIDS Resources, Education & Services (CARES) provides services to ten Vermont counties through offices in Burlington, Montpelier, Rutland and St. Johnsbury. Last year, CARES served over 150 Vermonters living with HIV/AIDS, provided education and training to over 8,000, and operated an eleven-unit affordable housing project for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Paul Olsen is the Vermont correspondent for in newsworld.

Vermont Legislators Oppose CU Recognition in Georgia Lawsuit

Sixty-nine members of Vermont's House of Representatives filed a friend of the court brief in a Georgia child custody case involving the legal recognition of civil unions outside of Vermont. Urging the Georgia Court of Appeals to reject the claim of the lesbian plaintiff that her civil union should be recognized for purposes of her child visitation rights, the Vermont lawmakers wrote: "to the extent that Appellant's argument is based on the idea that in Vermont a civil union is a marriage, Appellant's argument is mistaken and should be rejected by the Court of Appeals."

Lawmakers signing the brief include:

Steven Adams (Hartland)	Ward Mann (Leicester)
David Allaire (Rutland City)	Fred Maslack (Poultney)
George Allard (St. Albans Town)	Frank Mazur (South Burlington)
Joseph Baker (West Rutland)	Thomas McGrath (Ferrisburgh)
Jason Barney (Highgate)	Mary Morrissey (Bennington)
David Bolduc (Orleans)	Kevin Mullin (Rutland Town)
Donald Bostic (St. Johnsbury)	Patricia O'Donnell (Vernon)
Stephanie Bourdeau (Hyde Park)	Harvey Otterman (Topsham)
David Brown (Walden)	Allen Palmer (Pownell)
Erron Carey (Chester)	Ira Park (Mendon)
David Clark (St. Johnsbury)	Janice Peaslee (Guildhall)
William Cleland (Northfield)	Richard Pembroke (Bennington)
Judith Crowley (West Rutland)	Neil Randall (Bradford)
Virginia Duffy (Rutland City)	David Rogers (Castleton)
Margaret Flory (Pittsford)	Carl Rosenquist (Georgia)
Avis Gervis (Enosburg)	Henry Schaefer (Colchester)
Kevin Goodridge (Albany)	George Schiavone (Shelburne)
Henry Gray (Barre Town)	Craig Scribner (Bristol)
Carl Haas (Rutland City)	Loren Shaw (Derby)
John Hall (Newport City)	Nancy Sheltra (Derby)
Robert Helm (Castleton)	Harvey Smith (New Haven)
Constance Houston (Ferrisburgh)	Robert Starr (Troy)
Richard Howrigan (Fairfield)	Matthew Stevens (Essex Junction)
Richard Hube (Londonderry)	Ruth Towne (Berlin)
Cola Hudson (Lyndon)	Leo Valliere (Barre City)
William Johnson (Canaan)	Stephen Webster (Randolph)
Sylvia Kennedy (Chelsea)	Robert Weeks (Wallingford)
Duncan Kilmartin (Newport City)	James Willett (St. Albans City)
Linda Kirker (Essex Junction)	John Winters (Swanton)
Thomas Koch (Barre Town)	Philip Winters (Williamstown)
Albert Krawczyk (Bennington)	Robert Wood (Brandon)
Leigh Larocque (Barnet)	Kurt Wright (Burlington)
Joseph Larose (Richford)	Mark Young (Orwell)
Steven Larrabee (Danville)	Harry Monti (Barre City)
Kathy Lavoie (Swanton)	

Massachusetts Marriage Case Advances

BY PAT ROBINSON

"It's time for our Commonwealth to live up to the equality guarantees of our state Constitution," were some of Mary Bonato's remarks during a press release by New England's Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) in Boston, August, 20, 2001.

GLAD has filed a 69 page motion for summary judgment with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office as the next step in a case filed by seven same-sex couples in April 2001, in Suffolk Superior Court, Boston, Mass.

The seven gay and lesbian couples from five different counties in the Commonwealth have all applied for and been refused a marriage license. On this basis, the attorney's for the plaintiffs brought the suit based on similar actions used as the cornerstone of the Baker vs. State landmark Vermont case and decision.

Ms. Bonato, GLAD Civil Rights Director and an attorney for the case, will argue that: "any interpretation of the marriage laws as prohibiting civil marriage between same-sex couples is unconstitutional." Among the many arguments laid out in the

brief, were the following: "denying civil marriage to gay and lesbian couples violates the plaintiff's rights to equality; that access to civil marriage is a fundamental right; and that there is simply no legitimate secular justification for excluding qualified same-sex couples from the institution of state-created civil marriage."

Some of the specific items the law would do: Protect the confidential and intimate nature of the married relationship, such as hospital rights; respects the family as an economic unit, i.e. obligation of support, pensions, social security, and death benefits; interdependence of family members, i.e. family leave, workers compensation, etc.; create and maintain parent/child relationships, i.e. custody and support.

The plaintiff couples involved in this landmark case are: Hillary and Julie Goodridge of Boston, parents of a five year old daughter; Michael Horgan and Ed Balmelli of Boston and from large families in Central Mass.; Maureen Brodoff and Ellen Wade of Newton who share a twelve year old daughter; Gloria Bailey and Linda Davies, a cou-

ple for thirty years; Richard Linnell and Gary Chalmers of Northbridge, parents of an eight year old daughter; Heidi Norton and Gina Smith of Northampton with two young sons; and Robert Compton and David Wilson of Boston, each parents of grown children, and David is a grandfather of four, also.

More information regarding this case, and the plaintiffs can be found at GLAD's website at www.glad.org or by calling (617) 426-1350. Copies of the summary judgment filings are available on request, Goodridge v. Dept. of Public Health, Suffolk Superior Court No. 01-1647-A.

20 people at the New Ipswich Post Office, New Ipswich, N.H. and 16 people at a meeting in the Episcopal Divinity School Library, Radcliff College, Cambridge, Mass were asked the following question on August 21, 2001: "Massachusetts Superior Court is about to hear a case regarding same-sex civil marriage/unions. You are A.) for B.) against C.) undecided?" The breakdown is as follows: Mass. residents, 14 for; 2 undecided. N.H., 11 for; 2 against; 7 undecided.

Is your advertising on target?

Contact
ads@mountainpridemedia.org
 and get the best results for you
 advertising dollars.

Summer is coming to an end,
 but the fun has just begun!

Grab a copy of *Out In The Mountains*,
 and find out what's happening.

Can't find a copy?

Check out our distribution points
 online at
www.mountainpridemedia.org