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the Health Department A.I.D.S. Hotline at 1-800-882-AIDS.

Someone considering taking the test should prepare themselves emotionally for it. Why are you considering it? How will you react to a negative or a positive test result? How important is it for you to know?

For some, the emotional price of not knowing, the uncertainty, is higher than finding out one may be positive. For others, that information may be so devastating that taking the test would be a major mistake. What anyone testing positive will face, however, is not a clear result, but more uncertainty.

NOW President speaks on ERA

by Charlotte Dennett

When NOW President Ellie Smeal speaks on the ERA, she goes straight to the bottom line of women's oppression. In the once-lost tradition of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Alice Paul, she identifies that bottom line as money.

Addressing NOW's annual state conference in Burlington Sept. 13, Smeal told women assembled at the University of Vermont that "the ERA is not just a matter of simple justice. Real needs are at stake. But our opposition is using fear, distortion and scare tactics to cover up economic need."

Smeal identified employers of women and insurance companies as key players against passage of the ERA. While campaigning for the federal ERA in the Midwest, she explained, "we kept

Even a negative test result can bring uncertainty and unwanted changes. Perhaps most dangerously, it can lead one to the mistaken conclusion that there is licence to participate in unsafe sexual activities again. That, obviously, should not be the case: everyone in a high risk group will continue to need to protect themselves and their partners by practicing risk reduction techniques until the A.I.D.S. crisis has ended.

If you are considering the test, take a few simple steps to prepare yourself for it. Find out everything you can about it beforehand, making sure your decision is informed and well-thought out. Schedule getting your results at a time when you will be in a

asking why certain legislators refused to vote "yes" when the polls showed that the vast majority of Americans were for the ERA. They told us it was about farmers. They told us, 'This is an agricultural state.' They said the Farm Bureau was against us."

But Smeal discovered that the Farm Bureau had many more members in Cook County (Chicago) than in down-state Illinois where the farmers were. Why? Because the Farm Bureau represents some 40 insurance companies. And insurance companies, besides being among the largest employers of women, profit from overcharging women in health and disability, life and auto insurance.

Smeal told her audience that insurance companies, with the help of Senator Jesse Helms, are currently trying to bail out of health insurance coverage for AIDS victims because they

position to process them, to take time out to deal with the information, not at a time when lots of other things are going on emotionally in your life. Tell a small group of trusted friends that you are taking the test, and make sure they are available to help you deal with results. Think ahead about who (friends, lovers, tricks) you may want to tell about the results, and then stick to just telling that list -- it is too easy to blurt the information out in an emotional moment and then regret your choice of confidantes.

The decision to test or not must be an informed and rational one, otherwise, the test may be more devastating emotionally than medically.

know the disease is spreading and will ultimately cost them billions of dollars. Pointing to the Right's pamphlet purporting to show the "Gay/AIDS/ERA Connection," she said, "It's so cruel that this deadly disease is being used as a scare tactic against us."

Of course, she noted wryly, "if women were transmitting it; they'd have us in the closet." And if the opposition's literature were to point out that the virus was spread by semen rather than the vaguely worded "bodily fluids" or "sexual transmission," then "women might start thinking what safe sex is!"

Turning serious, Smeal concluded. "We're not prime victims yet, but AIDS will ultimately affect all of us because a virus does not discriminate. Right now it's being used to deny women a chance at economic equality by those who are profiting off us and trying to keep us down."

The Right's argument that the ERA will destroy the family likewise angers Smeal, since the ERA has been shown to have its strongest impact on family law and the issues of divorce, custody, and marital property.

"We are trying to shore up the family with money, not Hallmark cards," she said.

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VIOLENCE AND THE MILITARY:
Burlington Area Women Say "I don't Buy It"

REDIRECTION, the media project of Burlington Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) takes to the airwaves. WILPF has produced a series of five radio spots featuring local women talking about the impact of militarism and military spending on their lives. These 60-second spots will be aired on four local radio stations (WQCR, WVMT, WJOY, WDOT) for two weeks in October (October 5-8; October 14-17). In conjunction with the radio series, WILPF has produced an informational brochure highlighting the "I DON'T BUY IT" theme. Brochures will be distributed throughout Chittenden County. Watch for them and tune in your radio.



Along with Gov. Kunin, Burlington Mayor Bernard Sanders (pictured) spoke at this past summers Lesbian/Gay Pride Rally.