



file

City of Seattle  
Charles Royer, Mayor

King County  
Randy Revelle, Executive

**Seattle-King County Department of Public Health**  
Jesse W. Tapp, M.D., M.P.H. Director

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 31, 1985  
TO: Patricia <sup>pk</sup> Canova  
FROM: Will Jones  
SUBJECT: TOWN MEETING OF MAY 20

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OFFICE OF DIRECTOR  
SEATTLE-KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

On approximately May 16, a young female called the AIDS information line, she sounded very upset and demanded to know how AIDS was transmitted. I told her, "through intimate sexual contact and through sharing of blood and blood products, etc., like sharing IV needles." She asked, "Was that the only way?" I responded, "AIDS is not transmitted by casual contact; however, it is transmitted through sexual contact and through sharing of blood and blood products." Then she asked, "Well couldn't I get AIDS if a homosexual AIDS victim cuts their finger off and bleeds in my salad, well couldn't I? I mean isn't it possible?" My response was, "Health regulations do not allow any contaminated food to be served, food that anyone has bled in should never be served. AIDS is transmitted through intimate sexual contact and through transmission of blood and blood products; AIDS is not transmitted through casual contact." She said, "So I can get AIDS from my salad!" I then suggested she call the nurse in the AIDS clinic and gave her the number.

On the Sunday evening, May 20, Town Meeting program, I was surprised to hear a young woman remark that the Health Department AIDS information line told her, "Yes, I could get AIDS from my salad." The host of the program made it very sensational and, after repeating several times, finally attacked Dr. Handsfield to defend the Health Department's position.

I have no way of knowing if the young female on the program was the same person I had spoken to the previous week, or if I had spoken to her at all. People hear what they want to, what they hear is not necessarily what is said. Whenever the media is involved, things get misrepresented frequently. AIDS is an emotional issue on many levels. It is common for highly emotionally charged people to react in a situation with little integration of their intellect.

WJ:kp

# MEMORANDUM

SEATTLE-KING COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



TO: Patricia Canova

FROM: Bruce Miyahara *BM* DATE: 5/20/85

SUBJECT: AIDS INFORMATION PHONE LINE

After listening to an audience comment on Sunday's Town Meeting, I would like you to clarify the incident regarding the "cut finger and salad" discussion. I would additionally like an evaluation of the quality of information provided over the phone line.

BM:kp

cc: Jill Marsden  
Hunter Handsfield  
Will Jones

*Rita Hois  
Make sure we get a copy  
of Patricia's response  
Hunter, Jill*

May 21, 1985

*5-29-85  
Called Kathie Phillips  
for copy of response  
She will make sure  
we get one*

Ben's response:

A woman in the audience at Town meeting asked Hunter to tell her is she could contract AIDS if a chef (gay) cut his finger and the blood got into her salad. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ She said she called the AIDS Information Line and was told she could. Will responds that he told her the only way AIDS was transmittable was through intimate bodily secretions and through transmission of AIDS contaminated blood. Hunter responded on the television that the situation she described was highly unlikely, but in all honesty he was not sure.

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MAY 21 1985

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OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Julia