



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS

1493 CAMBRIDGE STREET CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D.
Commissioner

Mr. Robert W. Healy
City Manager
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

24 April 1990
Council Order #47

Dear Mr. Healy:

I am writing to answer the two specific questions put in this order reflecting concerns about condom availability at The Teen Health Center. I am glad to have another opportunity to address the main issue here, AIDS, education about AIDS and the prevention of further spread of AIDS in our City.

I have enclosed copies of my letter to the School Committee of March 11, 1990 in which I reviewed the seriousness of HIV infection and of AIDS. I then outlined a four part program of recommendations to decrease the spread of the condition. We are beginning to implement these programs. The main points are:

1. To encourage abstinence in the student population.

A. The present individual counseling of students at the Teen Health Center will continue. This counseling emphasizes abstinence as the only certain method of preventing AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

B. New student peer support groups are planned for those who wish to remain abstinent but who feel other peer pressure not to do so.

C. In addition to encouraging abstinence, programs to teach and increase skills in decision making exist and are under review now. Responsible decision making in regard to sexuality is of great importance. Student use of these same skills in responsible decision making about the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs is also very attractive at this time when all of these health threats are so serious and the subject of several task forces and committees in Cambridge.

2. To increase health education because it is the most important strategy in decreasing the spread of AIDS.

A. Age appropriate health education in the schools is now provided but there appears to be consensus that the times require more sustained and continuous courses to increase the students knowledge and therefore ability to protect themselves better.

B. The content of age appropriate health education in grades K-12 will be discussed in early May by students, parents, teachers and health professionals. Many types of courses have been developed and are available.

3. Parental Involvement is important and essential as parents are the primary health and sex educators of their children.

A. Several parent meetings are planned for early May. The aim is to provide further information about AIDS transmission and education for parents who wish to increase their own knowledge for the benefit of their children.

B. On going parent support groups to address this and other health related issues are planned for those parents who may wish to attend.

4. Protection for that percentage of students who need it by making condoms available.

A. The only other method (besides abstinence) widely accepted for greatly reducing the passage of HIV infection during sexual intercourse is the use of the latex condom.

B. Condom availability at The Teen Center Clinic will be in the context of disease prevention and health promotion and with counseling about abstinence and responsible decision making.

I have also enclosed a School Committee Order of March 20, 1990 (C90 259) which clearly states the limits of counseling and of condom distribution which the health providers at the Teen Health Center follow completely. In addition is a letter to the School Committee dated April 18, 1990 which expands on implementing the recommendations noted above.

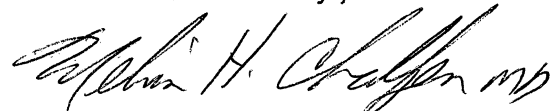
In regard to Question #1 of Order #47 at present no methods of contraception are being provided at the Teen Health Center. Counseling is provided on an individual basis for students and encourages abstinence as the only sure method for preventing HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. When condoms are made available it will be in the context of that aspect of health care which is disease prevention and health promotion.

In regard to Question #2 no tax dollars will be used to purchase condoms as they will be provided by donations. Programs on abstinence encouragement, health education, parental education and support groups, and disease prevention will in part be funded

by tax dollars and in part by the other funding parties of the Center.

I hope that these remarks answer the questions and concerns expressed. Condom availability is only one part, although an important part, of this overall effort to help people to decrease the spread of this deadly disease, AIDS, in Cambridge.

Yours sincerely,



Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D.

MHC

Enclosures

Copies: Mary Lou McGrath
John O'Brien



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS

1493 CAMBRIDGE STREET CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D.
Commissioner

Honorable Members
Cambridge School Committee
456 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02138

March 11, 1990

Dear School Committee Members,

AIDS Education and Prevention is actually the issue before us. I appreciate the chance to emphasize the seriousness of this subject and thank you for the opportunity to address some aspects of AIDS, a condition which I believe ranks with substance abuse and with violence as the major threats to public health in the first decades of life in this country.

Any disease that presents the problems of spread and fatalities that AIDS does must be countered in all ways possible. These ways must include the search for new and effective medications and for new vaccines. These ways must also include present knowledge applied in both traditional ways and in ways tailored to this disease for maximum positive results.

The issue of the availability of condoms is only one part, although an important part, of the subject and the effort to help people to decrease the spread of AIDS in Cambridge and elsewhere.

There are now some medications which slow the progress of AIDS but there are none which cure the disease. Also there is not at present a vaccine to prevent the development of the disease in a person exposed to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

HIV infection can be prevented if people know how to protect themselves and if they have the means with which to do so.

You have received packets of information about the means of transmission of HIV, about high risk groups, about the numbers of those infected with HIV and about the numbers who have died with complications of AIDS infection as well as other facts. I would point out that the total number of people who have died of AIDS infections in 1985 has almost doubled by early 1990 in Massachusetts and in the country. I would also point out that the CDC statistics state that the age 20-29 years group represents 21% of the total cases of AIDS in the United States and 20% of cases in Massachusetts. Since it takes 8-10 years for AIDS to develop after initial infection these cases must have in large part been exposed to the HIV virus in their teens, during high-school years. As noted in the fact sheet in Cambridge there have been reported

Neighborhood Health Centers • The Cambridge Hospital • School Health
Mayor Michael J. Neville Manor • Public Health • Environmental Health

85 cases of AIDS as of January 1990. At present Cambridge has the third highest number of AIDS cases per capita in Massachusetts.

Surveys of high school populations both here and at other comparable high schools indicate that a significant percentage of boys and girls have had sexual intercourse during high school years.

The need for education about AIDS prevention in these age groups then seems compelling.

First the best method to avoid sexual exposure to the AIDS virus is abstinence. Methods of support for the student who does not wish to begin sexual activity should be available through the clinic or peer support groups to reinforce the student's desire to abstain.

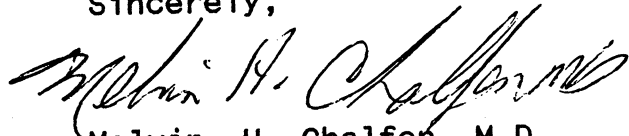
Second health education in general and education about AIDS transmission and prevention in particular done not only in AIDS AWARENESS WEEKS or in short term health classes but in ongoing age appropriate (K1-12) health education by teachers and health professionals is necessary to give students lasting knowledge about the dangers of health hazards such as smoking, drug abuse, and AIDS. Recommendations for health and sex education have been made in the past by appropriate committees within the School Department and also by the combined School and Health Departments School Health Task Force and I recommend their further consideration by the School Committee and School Department.

Third family input to the School and Health Departments through existing or new channels of communication is essential to tailor these prevention and educational efforts to our own communities within Cambridge. Since parents differ in the ease and comfort which they have in discussing topics such as AIDS transmission and prevention with their children and since some parents themselves would like to have resources to educate themselves further in such matters in order to have more facts for their children shouldn't consideration be given to establishing such a resource at the clinic or other site? Family input here is needed.

Fourth the only other method widely accepted for the prevention of transmission of HIV and recommended by the Centers for Disease Control for greatly reducing the passage of the AIDS virus during sexual intercourse is the latex condom. Students need to be aware of the fact that if they are engaging in sexual intercourse that using condoms is the most effective means of preventing the spread of HIV. Knowledge alone, however, will not prevent the spread of AIDS. Condoms should be available readily, at multiple sites, not only pharmacies where they are now available but also through condom vending machines and indeed at Health Clinics. In regard to the CRLS Teen Health Center condom availability and distribution should be in the context of that aspect of health care which is disease prevention and health promotion. Knowledge about AIDS and

its spread, about the ways AIDS is transmitted, counselling about sexuality and abstinence and condom availability should all lead to responsible decision making in this area and decrease the spread of this deadly infection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Melvin H. Chalfen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melvin" being more prominent.

Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D.
Commissioner

cc: School Committee
Robert W. Healy, City Manager

CHAIRMAN
MAYOR ALICE K. WOLF

VICE CHAIRMAN
FRANCES H. COOPER

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
456 BROADWAY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
(Tel. 498-9251)

--IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE--

MEMBERS
HENRIETTA DAVIS
ALFRED B. FANTINI
JAMES J. RAFFERTY
ALFRED E. VELLUCCI
LARRY WEINSTEIN

March 20, 1990

ORDERED:

That WHEREAS the HIV/AIDS epidemic is threatening young people in Cambridge; and WHEREAS the incidence of AIDS among young people across the country is increasing, and WHEREAS the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals, the Administrator of the Cambridge Hospital and the Chairman of the city's AIDS Task Force testified before the School Committee, unanimously recommending that to slow the spread of AIDS in our community that we in Cambridge:

- 1) Educate our children about HIV/AIDS
- 2) Support young people who wish to remain abstinent
- 3) Permit condoms to be dispensed in the Teen Health Center

THEREFORE IT IS VOTED that the Cambridge School Committee revises the Memo of Understanding between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Hospital dated April 22, 1988 which states the following: "Further that the Cambridge Hospital will not dispense contraceptives or private abortion counseling in the high school health center ..." so that it NOW READS: "Further, that the Cambridge Hospital will not provide abortion counseling or dispense contraceptives with the exception of condoms and materials necessary to their use which may be dispensed in the context of AIDS Prevention information and counseling." In addition the Administrator of the Cambridge Hospital and the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals will inform the School Committee of the procedure they will follow and the services they will offer - such as individual and group counseling, facilitating parent groups, etc., prior to implementing the change in the agreement.

A true copy:

Attest: *Claire E. Rodley*
Claire E. Rodley
Secretary of the School Committee

cc School Committee Members
Superintendent
✓ Commissioner of Health and Hospitals
Director, Teen Health Center
Administrator, Cambridge Hospital



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS

1493 CAMBRIDGE STREET CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D.
Commissioner

April 18, 1990

Honorable Members
Cambridge School Committee
456 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear School Committee Members:

In response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic that is threatening young people in Cambridge, I have recommended a variety of approaches to reduce the spread of the disease.

First, we need to develop a variety of methods of support for students who do not wish to engage in sexual activity. The Teen Health Center currently provides counseling and support on an individual basis for students and encourages abstinence as the only certain method for preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and conditions. Moreover, the health center staff firmly believe that most teenagers are not developmentally ready to accept the consequences of sexual activity. We will continue to provide counseling support for students individually and will begin offering support groups for students in May, 1990. A program to promote responsible decision making regarding abstinence, through buttons and flyers, is underway.

Second, comprehensive health education for all grades K-12 is likely to be the most important and effective strategy for preventing HIV/AIDS. As the School Department evaluates available curricula, the Department of Health and Hospitals and Teen Health Center staff members will be available to participate in the process and to develop approaches to implementation. Because of the resources that will be needed, it is very important that the School Committee, the School Department, the Department of Health and Hospitals, the Hospital, other community agencies, and local clergy collaborate in this effort.

Cambridge School Committee
April 18, 1990
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Third, discussions about AIDS prevention and adolescent sexuality must be extended to include parents who are the primary health and sexuality educators of Cambridge youth. Several parent meetings and workshops are currently being planned for May, 1990 to assist parents in communicating with their teenagers about AIDS and sexuality. In addition, we plan to offer on-going support groups to interested parents.

Fourth, we acknowledge that despite our best efforts, many teens will decide to engage in sexual activity. Accordingly, latex condoms with nonoxynol 9 will be made available to teens at the Teen Health Center. This will occur, according to the protocol developed several weeks ago, within the context of primary health care, counseling and education services. The counseling and education provided will focus on responsible decision making and will provide active support for students in choosing to abstain from sexual activity. We are currently finalizing an implementation plan with the School Administration that will include providing information to faculty and staff.

Finally, in light of the recent report of increased numbers of sexually transmitted diseases among teenagers statewide, this comprehensive plan for the City of Cambridge seems timely and responsible. We feel privileged to be able to collaborate with the School Committee, the School Department, parents, students, clergy and other members of the Cambridge community in addressing the AIDS epidemic.

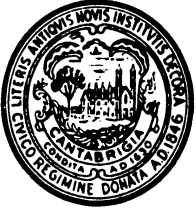
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Melvin H. Chalfen MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the "MD" clearly visible at the end.

Melvin Chalfen, MD
Commissioner of Health
and Hospitals

cc: John O'Brien,
Hospital Administrator

Mary Lou McGrath,
Superintendent of Schools



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 498-9011

FAX. 868-8159

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

April 30, 1990

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Council Order #47, dated 4/2/90, relative to questions raised by the City Council concerning the condom issue at Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, attached please find a report from Dr. Melvin H. Chalfen, Commissioner of Health and Hospitals, regarding this matter.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
enclosure

Agenda # 7 S, 489

Council Order Number 47 of 4/2/90 regarding
the condom issues at C.R.L.S.

In City Council,

April 30, 1990

Placed on file