

## Journal



## and Courier

LAFAYETTE-WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

A GANNETT NEWSPAPER 35 CENTS

# Victim blames transfusion for AIDS

By John Norberg

Journal and Courier

A 7½-months-pregnant Lafayette woman who has contracted Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome says she was infected with the virus through blood transfusions administered at Home Hospital.

Robert Verplank of the Home Hospital board of directors Wednesday said that the woman — identified through public documents as Amy Sloan, 23, of Lafayette — has filed a complaint

with the Indiana Department of Insurance, Patient Compensation Division.

Sloan is due to deliver her first child in December or January, according to the complaint and supporting documents, which also say her child could be born with the virus, commonly called AIDS.

AIDS is a breakdown in the body's immune system. Victims usually die in two to three years. It is primarily transmitted through sexual contact or through blood transfusions from a victim.

**More evidence suggests there are AIDS 'carriers'**  
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Sloan's complaint — against Home Hospital, the Central Indiana Regional Blood Center, Dr. Margaret E. Waid and Dr. Leonard Boral — is a required first step in a malpractice suit, according to Indiana law. Waid and Boral are with the blood bank, located in Indianapolis.

Repeated attempts to reach Sloan Wednesday were unsuccessful. According to the complaint, she is a dental assistant but has since resigned her job. Her case was diagnosed several months ago, the complaint says.

Sloan is represented in her complaint by Lafayette lawyer Charles Vaughn. He said he could not comment on the case.

Sloan says she contracted AIDS, which is incurable, on or about Oct. 26, 1982, in Home Hospital, where she received three units of blood.

The blood came from three different donors, according to her complaint. The complaint says there was a failure in 1982 to properly screen blood donors to make sure they weren't AIDS carriers.

Verplank said the blood that Sloan received came from the Central Indiana Regional Blood Center, which serves 38 hospitals in 26 Indiana counties, including Tippecanoe.

Verplank declined to take ques-

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## OUTSIDE

## Windy



Windy, chance of rain  
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## CLOSING STOCKS

## DOW JONES

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# AIDS

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tions about Sloan's contentions and made no attempt to deny or confirm the charges in her complaint. He said the odds of contracting AIDS through a blood transfusion are one in a million.

He said there is concern within the medical community that Sloan's contentions might erode public confidence in the blood donation system.

Don Franklin, executive director of the Central Indiana Regional Blood Center, said there is no test the blood center can administer to confirm that a donor does not carry AIDS.

"I certainly am concerned about how this will affect blood donors and patients in hospitals," he said.

Franklin said blood donors in central Indiana are now asked if they are homosexuals or intravenous drug users or if they fall into other AIDS high risk categories — Haitians, hemophiliacs, sexual partners of AIDS carriers, or blood donors who have previously received blood transfusions.

He said blood taken from high-risk individuals does not go into the general supply but might be used for experimentation.

There is one other known victim of AIDS in Lafayette. A man in his late 20s was diagnosed in 1983. He has not been identified, but his case is monitored by the Indiana State Board of Health.

Charles Fallis of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta Wednes-

day said there have been 91 confirmed cases in the nation of AIDS being contracted through blood transfusions — 79 of those in adults. He said those 79 adults represent 1 percent of the total number of adult AIDS victims.

Fallis said there is a blood test for AIDS under development.

People cannot contract AIDS by donating blood, Fallis said. He also said they should not refuse necessary blood transfusions because of fear of contracting AIDS.

"The chances of getting AIDS through a blood transfusion are very small," he said. "The risk a person would run from not receiving a transfusion are much greater than the risk of getting AIDS."

Fallis said AIDS can remain in incubation for six months to 2 years.

"Patients may recover from one or more specific infections," he said. "But unfortunately, something usually comes along that they do not recover from. Most AIDS patients do not live more than two or three years."

The next step in Sloan's complaint will be for the Patient Compensation Division of the Indiana Department of Insurance to name a three-physician panel to review the complaint.

The findings of the panel later can be introduced in court as evidence in a civil lawsuit. Indiana law limits liability — and total compensation — in malpractice cases to \$500,000.