

# STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



curs when a person's pancreas produces no insulin.

Type II (non-insulin dependent) Diabetes occurs when a person's pancreas still produces insulin, but for some reason the body is not able to use it effectively.

Gestational Diabetes can suddenly appear in pregnant women who have never exhibited any signs of high blood glucose.

For more information about diabetes, contact your doctor, your county health department, or call the American Diabetes Association toll free at 1-800-259-6553 or Juvenile Diabetes Foundation toll free at 1-800-544-2873.

—OKLAHOMA DEPT. OF HEALTH  
11/18/96

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONFIRMS FIRST HANTAVIRUS CASE IN OKLAHOMA

■(GIT) Oklahoma Health Department officials recently confirmed the first case of Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome in a resident of Texas County in the state's Panhandle, said J.R. Nida, M.D., Oklahoma State Department of Health commissioner.

"HPS is a newly discovered viral disease, considered to be an emerging pathogen," Nida said. "The virus is present in the excreta (urine or droppings) of infected mice. Persons may become exposed to the virus by breathing airborne particles of dust containing the virus. Cases are associated with exposure to rodents, rodent excreta and contaminated dust."

The best way to avoid exposure to the virus is to avoid areas that may be infested with rodents.

Dr. Mike Crutchers, state epidemiologist, said Hantavirus does not affect its rodent carriers. It is transmitted to humans through an environment contaminated by rodent urine, droppings or saliva, but cannot be transferred from person to person.

The disease was first reported in the United States in an outbreak in the Four Corners region of New Mexico and Arizona in 1993.

Crutchers said many varieties of Hantavirus exist around the world, but the strain found in the United States is known as *Sin Nombre*.

If one suspects one has been in an area contaminated by the virus, one should see a doctor. Crutchers said a chest x-ray will be able to help a doctor distinguish between

Hantavirus and the flu. The first symptoms of the disease appear approximately two weeks after contact with the virus. There is no evidence of person-to-person spread of the disease.

Hantavirus is characterized by high fever, muscle aches and stomach complaints. Crutchers said that these symptoms do sound a lot like the ordinary flu, but the infected person then develops a dry cough followed by an abrupt onset of pneumonia.

People who are infected with the virus must be hospitalized under intensive care, Crutchers said. Hospital personnel treat the person aggressively, which may require careful management of electrolytes and respiratory support.

The doctor said no cures or treatments have been developed to date.

—MICHELLE BOYD WATERS  
11/19/96

## GOVERNOR RECEIVES TRAUMA TASK FORCE REPORT

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Governor Frank Keating Tuesday received a report and final recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Trauma Systems Development for Oklahoma. The task force was formed after questions arose over the state's lack of a formal, comprehensive trauma care system.

Among the recommendations of the task force: establishment of a statewide trauma system that matches minor or major trauma hospital recourses with an injured person's treatment needs; implementation of standardized guidelines for patient triage, transport and transfer statewide; implementation of a trauma registry in all hospitals and rehabilitation centers statewide; exploration and implementation of digital and communications technology (telemedicine); promotion of statewide access to 9-1-1 service; and implementation of widespread injury prevention education programs.

The task force was formed following the airing of a national TV news program which pointed out apparent flaws in Oklahoma's system.

—THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
11/19/96

*"It is easier to know man in general  
than to understand one man in  
particular."*

*La Rochefoucauld  
Maxims, 1665*

## ADOPTION REFORM ON THE WAY

■(GIT) Nine members of the Adoption Law Reform Committee met at the Capitol Thursday. Representative Russ Roach, D-Tulsa, chaired the four hour meeting to discuss proposed changes in state adoption laws. The Committee debated recommendations and amendments to several adoption law proposals, before submitting a report to the House staff for bill drafting.

The first issue considered was a Putative Fathers Subcommittee Report. A procedure was established permitting a putative father of a child conceived out of wedlock to consent to adoption prior to or after the birth of a child. If the consent was executed before a District Court Judge, the consent would be irrevocable except for fraud or duress by the adoptive parents or adoptive agency.

Current law allows a birth parent to petition a court to withdraw consent within 30 days. The court may grant this request if they find it is in the best interest of the child. Due to Judges' varying opinions about what constitutes the best interest, there have been inconsistencies in application of the provisions. Making the consent irrevocable will bring consistency and certainty to the process.

Tulsa Law Professor, Marianne Blair, unsuccessfully petitioned for revocability for any reason for up to seven calendar days following a birth. Committee member John O'Connor suggested future committees discuss whether a Judge must confirm that a biological parent has spoken with an attorney and is aware of all the consequences of relinquishing their rights, before a waiver may be granted.

An affidavit could be signed before a notary public if the father did not want to avail himself of the court. In the event of an affidavit being signed the consent could be revoked for any reason for fifteen calendar days following execution. The affidavit would constitute a waiver of the right to receive notice of any adoption proceeding or any proceeding to terminate parental rights regarding the child. In addition, signing the document would be considered a denial of interest in the child. Therefore, the court could terminate any parental rights the putative father had to the child and approve an adoption without his consent.

Consent executed before the birth of a child would not extinguish the birth father's duty to support the mother or child during

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