

prepared on an unclean surface where raw, animal-derived foods, such as poultry products, have been prepared, or when cooked foods are placed on such an unclean surface before being served. Food-related hazards, commodity by commodity, and microbe by microbe, as well as practices relating to safe handling of each food type, should be discussed as completely as possible with AIDS and ARC patients.

Physicians need to counsel AIDS and ARC patients and HIV-seropositive persons on ways to avoid foodborne infections and to instruct them on how to avoid other infections as well. This type of information should be made part of an overall strategy of defensive living by HIV-infected persons, and particularly by AIDS and ARC patients.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dr. Brandt Did Not List the Number One Cause of Preventable Death

Dr. Edward N. Brandt, Jr., laments, "One of my concerns about acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is that it is beginning to attract so much attention that other things are being neglected" . . . in "Hard Choices in Public Health," July-August issue (1). Just 5 years ago, Dr. Brandt, then Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services, announced that AIDS had been established as the Public Health Service's number one priority, complete with bi-weekly AIDS bulletin and a toll-free AIDS hotline (2). Other public health problems that Dr. Brandt now notes deserve high priority include drunk driving and drug abuse. Dr. Brandt's list does not include the number one cause of preventable premature death in the United States, cigarette smoking. This health problem saves one worrying about "shortcomings of legislative remedies," since to date Congress has not given responsibility or authority to any Federal executive agency to regulate the use of cigarettes. The smoking problem is a prime example of why Dr. Brandt observes, "It [the world of

public health] is also frustrating and conducive to cynicism." The one legislative accomplishment of warnings on cigarette packs is the negation of any liability on the part of cigarette manufacturers for their product. To date, the Supreme Court has declined to hear this matter. Between the early 1950s and 1980s lung cancer deaths have increased 381 percent in black males and 444 percent in black females. The August 1988 issue of *Ebony* has an advertisement: "Save a Dreamer," identifying the Miller Brewing Company, a division of Philip Morris, (the number one cigarette company in the United States) as the founding sponsor of the Thurgood Marshall Black Education Fund.

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