

# **THE GOLD MEDAL FOR SUPERIOR MEDICAL ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

August, 1989

Martin Griffin, MD, MPH, has been awarded the Gold Medal for Superior Accomplishment from the State of California, Department of Developmental Services. The award is for Griffin's work during the past 6 years in controlling Hepatitis B as chairman of the Hepatitis B and Aids Task Force. The task force consists of Public Health officers and nurses from each of the 11 State Hospitals and Developmental Centers.

Griffin is Public Health Officer at Sonoma Developmental Center and medical consultant to the Department of Developmental Services in Sacramento. He is a graduate of Stanford Medical School and UC School of Public Health and resides in Healdsburg. Griffin has been assisted in his Task Force work by Sonoma Public Health Nurses Gloria Colgrave and Arlene Poterache; by Lois Lowden, MD of Department of Mental Health and Don Bowling of Department of Developmental Services in Sacramento; by Ron Roberto, MD, Department of Health Services, Berkeley.

Hepatitis B, a blood borne viral disease has been the most serious contagious disease in the institutions for the developmentally disabled for many years. Under Griffin's supervision, California developmental centers were among the first in the nation to screen all of their clients and employees for hepatitis B status. It was found that 11% of all clients were lifetime carriers as compared with 0.2% in the general population. Hepatitis B is debilitating and leads to an increased number of deaths from hepatocellular carcinoma.

Prior to the availability of vaccine in 1982, Hepatitis B was a leading cause of work-related infectious disease among hospital personnel exposed to blood, such as accidental needle stick. Several cases of disabling Hepatitis B among employees occurred each year causing much loss of time and expense to the State.

As a result of Dr. Griffin's leadership and planning all susceptible clients have now been immunized – preventing new carriers. For employees, those with high risk jobs were vaccinated first and to date about two-thirds of all susceptible level-of-care employees in developmental centers have been immunized at no cost to themselves.

The vaccine has proven to be effective and safe. The number of cases of work-related Hepatitis B among 7000 employees in all 7 developmental centers in California has dropped from 22 between the years of 1982 and 1987 to 0 cases in 1988 and so far 0 in 1989. In 1988 and to date, no work days have been lost and there have been no industrial claims.

Dr. Griffin also made a detailed Hepatitis B survey of each of the 5 psychiatric hospitals in California and initiated an effective program of prevention and vaccination for employees and patients.

— Don Bowling

“Unless we recognize that the cumulative impact of mediocre water- and land-use planning is blighting our land and our economic future, we will continue to see a steady decline in the health of our families and communities, and in the quality of our lives.”

—*Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast*

