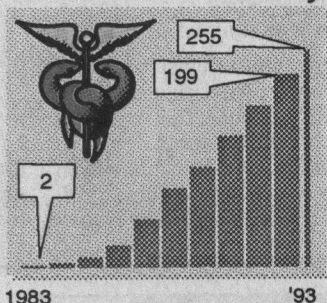


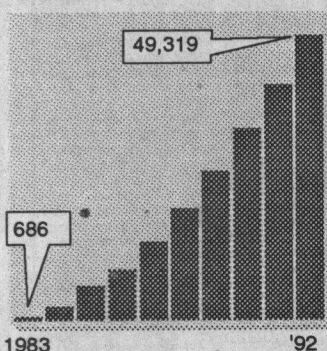
## AIDS cases

The number of people with AIDS is growing. This shows the total number of AIDS cases since 1983. Figures for 1993 reflect the months of January and February only.

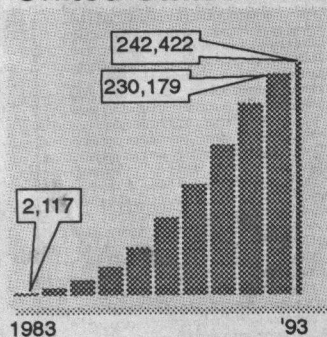
### Santa Cruz County



### California



### United States



# New definition doubles number of AIDS cases

By MARTHA MENDOZA  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Chet Haines, a 32-year-old Corralitos resident, was just as ill before the first of the year as he is now. But last year Haines was HIV positive and today, because of a broadened federal definition of AIDS, he is diagnosed with the killer disease.

Haines is not alone. The number of AIDS cases in Santa Cruz County has nearly doubled because of the U.S. Centers of Disease Control's new definition of AIDS, which took effect Jan. 1. The dramatic increase, tallied this week, has prompted an increase in service demands and raised hopes for new funds.

"It throws people in shock to one day feel the same as they did the day before, but because of a bureaucratic change be told they have moved from HIV to AIDS," said Tom Reynolds, a spokesman for ACT-UP San Francisco, an AIDS

advocacy group.

Last December, there were 68 people in the county living with AIDS. Today, three months later, an estimated 104 to 114 people are in that category.

Under the new definition, the AIDS diagnosis is based on the level of CD4 cells — also known as T4 helper cells — in one's blood. Those cells have been identified as the key target of the virus that causes AIDS.

The new definition also includes more gynecological problems, bringing more HIV-positive women into the category of people of AIDS.

"The increase is totally artificial based on changes in definitions," Dr. Ira Lubell, the county health director, said Tuesday.

Lubell said each new AIDS case means more than \$1,200 in federal grants and state funding for the county. While this is a drop in the bucket for the treatment of AIDS, which costs an

average of \$102,000 for the lifetime of each patient, Lubell said the additional funds are significant in this financially strapped county.

Despite the broader definition, Lubell said he is certain there are undiagnosed or unreported AIDS patients in the county.

"People fear discrimination, they fear losing their jobs, and there are also people walking around who just haven't been tested," he said.

For AIDS patients, the change in definition has been more than semantic. Haines said his diagnosis was an emotional blow.

"It was a shock," he said. "It brought me down."

Physically, Haines said there has been no discernible change.

"I was sick before I got my AIDS diagnosis and I'm still sick," he said.

But the new definition resulted in financial

*Please see AIDS — A3*

## AIDS definition

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differences for Haines. It helped him qualify for Social Security benefits and a county pilot project that provides some food, house-keeping and visiting nurses for people with AIDS.

"The new definition is a good thing for a lot of people, because there's a lot of help that is not available to you until you have the AIDS diagnosis," he said.

The HIV status of Haines' partner, 38-year-old Gary McMillin, remained unchanged under the new definition.

"So far, he's still HIV with disabling ARC (AIDS-related complex)," said Haines. "He had blood drawn today so we'll see."

Robin Stone, a county public health nurse who cares for HIV and AIDS patients including McMillin and Haines, says she hopes the new definition brings more resources and information to the community.

"I feel like we don't really have a clue on what's out there HIV-

wise," she said. "I think this will give us more of a handle on what's going on."

Kent Taylor, a spokesman for the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Ga., said the agency expected this increase in cases.

Nationally, Taylor said during the first two months of 1992 there were 7,505 new reported cases. This year, during the same period 12,243 new cases were reported, an increase of 63 percent.

"The majority of those additional cases is because of the new definition," he said. "That's where the new increase is coming from."

Taylor said he expects cases to increase for another few months, and then slack off toward the end of this year. He noted that future charts and graphs of AIDS cases will need to cite the change of definition in 1993 to explain the sharp increase.

John Laird, who heads the Santa Cruz AIDS Project, said his agency expects increased demand on its budget, but unlike the county

health agency, he doesn't expect additional funds.

Laird said the new definition means clients will have greater needs, especially when they first hear they have AIDS.

"No matter how sick someone is, it is still a powerful, one-time moment to receive an AIDS diagnosis," he said. "People in this situation have real strong needs for emotional support."

In addition, Laird said people who are diagnosed with AIDS may qualify for new programs and benefits, and they will need SCAP counselors to help them apply. Unfortunately, he said, this comes at a time with SCAP's client service's budget is \$15,000 short.

"The more clients you have within existing resources means you have a lesser ability to help," said Laird.

Still, Laird said he is pleased the definition was changed because it shows "who is really sick," and because it gives women with HIV and AIDS more recognition.