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New drug may help all victims of strokes

BOSTON (AP) — An experimental new drug powerfully protects stroke victims from catastrophic brain damage and may someday be given to virtually all such patients, researchers say.

Stroke is the nation's No. 3 killer after heart disease and cancer, striking about 600,000 Americans annually. Until recently, there was no treatment. Now it appears there are two.

In December, researchers showed that TPA — tissue-plasminogen activator, a widely used heart attack medicine — reduces the chances of brain damage if given quickly after a stroke.

Now, another team has found that a different medicine seems to work just as well and may be useful for many more patients.

"This is definitely the most exciting time ever in the history of strokes," said Karen Putney, vice president of the National Stroke Association.

The new drug, citalopram, is the first of a group of so-called neuroprotective drugs, which shield the brain from a destructive chain reaction started by a stroke. In a study, the drug appeared to limit the size of the stroke, speed recovery and improve victims' mental functioning.

The study was paid for by the maker of citalopram, Intermun Pharmaceuticals Inc. of Lexington, Mass.

Especially noteworthy are the medicine's lack of side effects and its apparent success even when given to a patient many hours after stroke symptoms start.

TPA, in comparison, must be given within three hours of the start of symptoms. Even when used properly, 6 percent of patients suffer disastrous bleeding inside their brains. Because of the drug's limitations, most

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Free in Cairo



Passengers from a jet hijacked to Libya arrive in Cairo. The plane was about to land in Cairo when three men from Luxor, Egypt, took over. None of the 145 passengers was injured. The hijackers surrendered after speaking with Libya's leader.

House passes insurance bill for health care

WASHINGTON (AP) — Looking for success where President Clinton failed, the Republican-controlled House passed legislation last night to guarantee access to health insurance to millions of Americans who lose or leave their jobs.

ARIZONA VOTE
Republicans J.D. Hayworth, Jim Kolbe, Matt Salmon, John Shadegg, Bob Stump and Democrat Ed Pastor all voted for the health insurance bill.

The vote was 297-151. Passage went the measure to the Senate, where Majority Leader Bob Dole, the GOP's presidential nominee-in-waiting, has scheduled debate for next month on a more modest measure. That narrower bill enjoys substantial bipartisan support and has the backing of the White House, as well.

"After years of talking about health care reform we are now, with a new Republican majority, going to enact health care reform," said Rep. Bill Archer, R-Texas, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. He said the measure provides for "availability and affordability" of insurance for millions who now go without it.

But the bill also contains several provisions that drew fire from the White House and Democratic critics, including ceilings on medical malpractice awards and a system of tax-deductible, individual savings accounts to cover medical expenses.

Republicans "loaded up a very good bill with a lot of goodies for special interests," including the American Medical Association, said Rep. Joseph Moakley, D-Mass. Other Democrats said these measures might doom the bill, taking insurance reform down with it.

In remarks before a final vote, House Speaker Newt Gingrich signaled a willingness to back down on some of the more controversial provisions.

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ANALYSIS

Line-item veto marks power shift

By Tom Rasm

WASHINGTON — Presidents since Jefferson have bemoaned the lack of power to strike specific items from spending bills.

Now a Republican Congress and a Democratic president are providing that line-item veto, shifting vital purse-string powers to the White House.

Budget politics may never be the same — if courts uphold the constitutionality of the measure President Clinton is poised to sign.

The legislation, sent to Clinton yesterday by the House, could open every line of the federal budget to partisan assault.

One analyst said a president could use the power "as a hammer," threatening to veto dam projects or federal buildings in a lawmaker's district unless he supported the White House on other issues.

It marks the biggest shift of power from one branch of government to another since 1974, when Congress passed legislation to strip then-President Nixon from "impeachment," or refusing power.

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Line-item veto

The Senate passed line-item veto legislation Wednesday that would allow the president to strip individual items without having to veto the entire bill and put at risk projects and programs he supports.

Highlights of the legislation

■ The president could cancel funds appropriated by Congress for individual programs or projects.

■ He can also eliminate tax benefits targeted to groups of 100 or fewer beneficiaries.

■ He can also cut out spending on new entitlement programs and any additions to the food stamp program.

■ The bill has an eight-year lifetime, giving Congress a chance to reconsider if the balance of power has tipped too much toward the executive branch.

■ Congress would have 30 days to decide which vetoed items it wants to restore; a two-thirds vote is needed to overturn a presidential veto of Congress' attempt to restore deleted funding.

'Freemen' are just criminals, prosecutors say

1996 The New York Times

JORDAN, Mont. — To Montana's Freeman, the rural complex of machine sheds, wheat silos and ranch houses here is a new Federal Reserve bank.

To federal prosecutors, the Freeman's compound is a school for crime.

Armed with word processors and laser printers, the fugitive tax protesters have generated bogus money orders that over the last year defrauded banks, credit card companies and mail order houses of more than \$1.8 billion, according to federal indictments issued yesterday in arranging two men in billings.

According to the indictments, the men, LeRoy Schweitzer and Daniel Peterson, regularly gave weekend seminars on how to use computers to generate false financial documents.

Until FBI agents arrested the pair Monday,

Not only did they get the goods for nothing, but they wrote the bogus checks for more than the merchandise cost, and then immediately demanded cash refunds.

800 people had traveled here from more than 30 states over the last year to learn the forgery techniques.

Yesterday, armed Freeman blocked the county road in front of their farms with a barbed wire barricade and threatened journalists who approached.

A "scheme to get something for nothing" is how the indictment describes the Freeman's system of sending companies phony checks for merchandise. Not only did they get the

goods for nothing, but they wrote the checks for more than the merchandise cost, and then immediately demanded cash refunds.

"You will be billed monthly for the principal, plus 18 percent per year for the balance due if you refuse to send refund," reads a prototype threatening letter included in a "proof packet," distributed to people who pay \$100 a head for the seminar.

About 10 percent of companies and banks failed to identify the fakes, if federal estimates are correct. Those estimates say that the Freeman and their disciples have issued \$19.5 million in bogus money orders and laid checks.

"I've heard \$61 million — and I wouldn't be surprised if it was more than that," said Bruce Parker, who heads the Butte, Mont.,

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Tomorrow in The Arizona Daily Star

Jackie's stuff
A goodly portion of the many possessions of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis — including a surprising amount of costume jewelry — will be auctioned by Sotheby's in New York next month.

Annual bike ride
Sunday's Tour of the Tucson Mountains is dedicated to pro triathlete Jimmy Riccitello, thought by many to be one of the nicer folks ever to walk on planet Earth.

WEATHER

Cloudy and breezy. Today is expected to be mostly cloudy this morning with a chance of showers, becoming partly cloudy and breezy this afternoon with northwest winds of 15 to 25 mph. Look for a high in the upper 70s. Page 17A.

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Reform rabbis OK same-sex marriages

Compiled from wire reports

PHILADELPHIA — A group of Reform rabbis endorsed the legalization of homosexual marriages yesterday but stopped short of recommending rabbis perform the ceremonies.

The 1,750-member Central Conference of American Rabbis is the first major group of Jewish leaders formally to oppose government bans on same-sex marriages.

"As Jews, and specifically in the reform movement, we've always expressed concern for those we feel aren't treated fairly," said Rabbi Robert Elmsin of Arnold, Md.

"You cannot call upon the state to allow these marriages and then refuse to perform the marriages," said Rabbi Eric B.

Winitz of Princeton Junction, N.J.

But Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin, the conference president, said the resolution "is a matter of civil rights. It is certainly not connected to any question of rabbinic officiation."

Maslin said the organization expects to vote on single-sex marriage officiation at next year's meeting in Denver.

The conference voted six years ago to accept gay rabbis into its ranks.

About 42 percent of the nation's 5.8 million Jews identify themselves as members of the Reform movement, according to a 1990 survey by the Council of Jewish Federations.

The vote came on the final day of the CCAR's annual five-day convention.



Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin