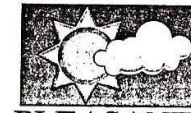


HOME
FINAL

The Columbus Dispatch

PLEASANT
High 75/Low 50
Details/8C

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 17, 1995

\$1.50

Fragile Lives: *The fateful letter*

A father's vow

- Monday: The appeal
- Tuesday: A final push
- Wednesday: Decision time

Threat of losing disabled daughter has dad fighting for her home care

By Michael J. Berons
Dispatch Staff Reporter

WITH NIGHT CAME the promise. Exhausted and home late from work, as usual, [redacted] nudged open his daughter's bedroom door to watch her sleep. She was curled tightly on a mattress encircled by padded, wooden walls — more box than bed.

[redacted] had spent hours with hammer and pine crafting the only safe world he could for Lauren, whose 7-year-old body moves strangely and independently of a younger mind.

He watched her now, ignoring the walls, imagining her as a tiny Sleeping Beauty.

I will never leave you.

Though Lauren could not understand the words, surely she could feel his thoughts. He prayed that she would never see his fear.

The threat of losing Lauren had arrived like a bombshell with the morning mail that November day.

A letter from the Ohio Department of Human Services informed [redacted] that the family's Medicaid benefits were being canceled. The money to pay nurses to watch Lauren while he works would no longer be supplied, nor would money for Lauren's special education and therapy.

The state's reason: Lauren is not sick enough.

Lauren has the type of cerebral palsy that contorts muscles and causes mental retardation. She is blind, partially paralyzed from a stroke, unable to speak

Please see **VOW** Page 2A

For eight months, The Dispatch followed the extraordinary lives of Lauren, Dale Jr. and Kathleen, three severely disabled children whose parents care for them at home.

Home health care carries a steep price — both financial and emotional — but these families believe it outweighs all other options. Their commitment forces them to negotiate — and battle — a Medicaid system that controls their ability to provide that care.

In a four-day series beginning today, three reporters and three photographers chronicle the fragile lives of these families — the turbulence, the joy, the successes and the failures.

Inside:

- Medicaid waivers explained / 18
- In caring for their children, the Sapp and Biel families must deal with red tape / 4-58



[redacted] feeds his daughter, Lauren, through a tube in her stomach. Behind [redacted] is the bed he made for his 7-year old.

Chris Russell / Dispatch

VOW from 1A

except for birdlike screeches and fed through a tube in her stomach.

Lauren is a danger to herself and cannot be left alone, but she does not require emergency care daily. Because of this, the letter stated, she no longer qualifies for help.

went to bed that night certain that Ohio was trying to destroy his family with a perverse Medicaid lottery in which parents pray that their children remain critically ill — or risk losing benefits.

The loss of benefits extends beyond dollars, though. If could no longer afford to care for Lauren at home in West Chester, Ohio, the only alternatives seemed to be foster care or institutionalization.

wanted the state to help him care for Lauren in his home. There should be no other alternative, he felt.

By morning, shaky hands were pounding a typewriter. Though he did not understand the Medicaid system — or who ran it — he fingered the date, "Nov. 7, 1994," and began, "To whom it may concern."

As a 34-year-old single father and businessman, knows the wisdom of attacking a problem quickly and succinctly. His written request for an appeal hearing consisted of four paragraphs of his best vocabulary.

Medicaid benefits are "vital" to allowing Lauren to live at home, he wrote. "I do not understand the assessment that Lauren is not disabled. Despite the fact that she is cute and vivacious, she is completely and totally disabled — by any standards."

As signed the letter, his pulse was pounding like drums in his head.

The battle had begun.

A MATTER OF WAIVERS

To the parents of dying children, Sandy Sterrett is both sainted and hated.

A self-described bureaucrat for the Department of Human Services, Sterrett — along with other department officials — decides which sick kids get special Medicaid benefits and which do not.

She is the "whom it may concern" was seeking.

Agreeing with staff reports that Lauren is not sick enough, Sterrett approved the decision to take away the benefits.

Traditionally, Medicaid is reserved for the poor on welfare. Under federal guidelines, a family of four cannot earn more than \$15,150 annually. Even a \$5 birthday gift leads to a maze of paperwork.

Such requirements, though, were prompting parents of sick children to quit their jobs to go on welfare. Poverty with a Medicaid card was better than losing a child to foster care or an institution.

A solution was offered in 1981 when the federal government created Medicaid waivers. The net result: Income caps were waived, and parents could remain working taxpayers while their children received Medicaid. A key benefit enables nurses to care for sick children in their homes while parents work.

Waivers have been wildly embraced. Parents overwhelm

THE FAMILY

Home: West Chester, Ohio

Father:

Mother:

Children: Lauren, 7



Chris Russell/Dispatch

Lauren is helped off a bus at her school, which is near the family's apartment in West Chester, Ohio.

A QUEST FOR ANSWERS

Inhuman Services

That's the label deemed appropriate for the state agency that left him numb in the days after he sent his letter.

During a half-dozen phone calls, he had asked: Why did Lauren qualify for a Medicaid waiver a year ago but not now? Why was Ohio cutting all financial help to his home yet was willing to spend more money for foster care or institutional care?

The questions went unanswered.

His calls to Human Services were daily, sometimes hourly, as the secretaries — long familiar with firm voice — adopted their own defense: "I'm sorry, nobody is available right now."

"I made it my life's work to become their personal nightmare," recalled. "Somebody was going to listen to me."

His request for an appeal hearing with Human Services was granted for Dec. 15, but he said condescending remarks from depart-

ment underlings suggested that he was doomed to fail in seeking to have the waiver reinstated.

was sure the state's decision was personal. The bureaucrats did not like him, his family or his lifestyle, he reasoned.

He is a divorced father with an impaired child living with a divorcee . He had

"Would you be interested in custody of your daughter?" asked a worker from a Kentucky children services agency.

Lauren had become an emotional and financial burden for his ex-wife, the worker explained.

who can count on both hands the number of times he has cried, wept like a baby that day, shaking uncontrollably as customers and employees watched.

Lauren was coming home.

For many nights after, would stand in Lauren's bedroom late at night and admire her shiny, black hair and china-doll face. She could look so normal.

"As a father, you come home after the kids are asleep and you go in and look at them. You can say, 'There's my kids. They're sleeping. They're protected. They're in my house. And life is good, and you go to bed.'"

But life wasn't so good anymore.

Staff contributions

For this series, *Dispatch* Reporters Michael J. Berens, Laurie Loscocco and Nancy J. Smeltzer spent eight months following the lives of families who care for severely disabled children. They were joined by Photographers Eric Albrecht, Lynn Ischay and Chris Russell.

In addition, *The Dispatch* sifted through thousands of pages of state and county documents — obtained through the state's public-records law — and interviewed more than 100 people to document the Medicaid waiver system.

Editors for the series were City Editor Mark Ellis and Assistant City Editor Mary Lynn Plageman. Assisting in the editing was Copy Editor Julia Brinksneider. Picture Editor Craig Holman edited the photographs, and infographic artist Tom Baker designed the graphics. Art Director Scott Minister designed the page layouts.

Comments about the series?

The Dispatch welcomes your comments on this series or any issues involving disabled children and their families.

Write *The Dispatch* in care of Reporters Michael J. Berens or Nancy J. Smeltzer, 34 S. 3rd St., Columbus 43215.

Comments also can be sent to *The Dispatch's* Internet address at: letters@cd.columbus.oh.us

FACT:

What you learn in our MBA program today, you can apply at work tomorrow.

Waivers do, however, come with federal strings attached: States are given a limited number, and they must pay 40 percent of the costs.

Two types of waivers are provided through Human Services. A third, the Individual Options Waiver, is overseen by the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

Lauren's daughter was placed on a Human Services waiver in 1993, but department officials a year later decided that Lauren's stable medical condition meant she should be placed on the options waiver, state records show.

The options waiver is the most popular, with a waiting list of 7,823 people. Lauren might wait 10 years for benefits.

Sterrett is never happy about removing a family from a waiver, she said, but — as she explains to many overwrought parents — waivers are not a right.

Ohio does not have a duty or a moral obligation to provide home medical care for all children who qualify for waivers, Sterrett said. The goal is to provide cost-effective care, wherever that may be.

Decisions admittedly are subjective. Many parents still feel as if the state uses a mixture of voodoo and other primitive practices to interpret complex but vague federal guidelines.

Sterrett knows that many parents see her as coldhearted, ruthless and more interested in the bottom line than lives.

Secure within her spacious, corner office on the 32nd floor of the Rhodes Tower on W. Broad Street, she is removed from her staff, which works in a cramped labyrinth of state-issued cubicles.

On days when pressures cannot be capped, Sterrett thinks of her three children — normal, thank God — and feels a rip in her heart for the thousands of parents begging for help.

"Sometimes, I close the door to my office, and I cry," she said.

MARILYN from 1A

Marilyn, the fourth hurricane to hit the Caribbean in as many weeks, hit St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands on Friday and grew in strength and size as it surged over St. Thomas, St. John and Puerto Rico's eastern islands yesterday.

The storm demolished wooden homes, ripped roofs off buildings and blocked roads with toppled utility poles and trees. It also left entire islands without electricity or phones, making it difficult to confirm reports of deaths, injuries and damage.

Seven people were missing amid 12-foot waves that sank two fishing boats off St. Croix. The U.S. Coast Guard picked up one person who was taken to a naval base in Puerto Rico.

Unconfirmed reports indicated at least three people were killed and 100 more were injured on St. Thomas, said FEMA Director James Lee Witt in Washington. At least 12 people were hurt in the collapse of the four-building Tower Apartment complex in the capital, Charlotte Amalie, and 40 to 50 more were believed trapped inside, he said.

FEMA was activating its "disaster medical assistance teams," civilian versions of MASH-style portable hospitals, spokesman Phil Cogan said.

seen the blows whirling on the nurses who had visited his home during the past year.

27, has a son from a previous marriage — 7. is a ringer for *Home Alone* actor Macaulay Culkin and just as mischievous. Together, and also have a son — 1.

plans to marry She has become Lauren's mother in all ways except name.

Maybe he would marry her after beating this waiver problem. They had agreed to keep Lauren forever, but failure haunted him. He had lost his daughter before.

TROUBLE SIGNS


Lauren seemed normal when she was born 1987, in Louisville, Ky. The seizures started three weeks later. As brain damage became apparent, the cerebral palsy was diagnosed.

With normal children, parents follow a well-traveled biological route from toddler to teenager to adult. Lauren would forever be a child. Her every breath, measured in dollars, is as uncertain as the meaning of life.

In less than a year, marriage deteriorated. He fought for custody of Lauren, but she remained with her mother, in Louisville. eventually moved to Cincinnati — close enough for weekend visits but out of reach of his ex-wife.

Five years later, a telephone call brought Lauren back to her father.

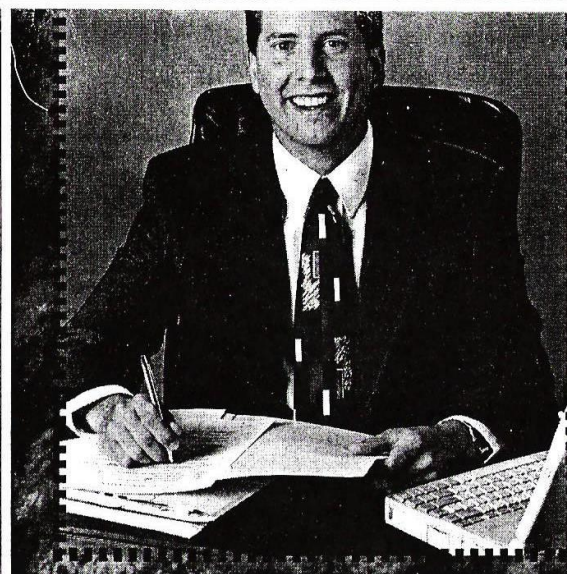
The midday frenzy had peaked in the electronics department of a national retail chain fighting for a toehold in the Cincinnati area. the department manager, answered the call on line No. 1.



LOOK FOR VALUABLE

Little Caesars®

COUPONS INSERTED IN TODAY'S PAPER!



"This program is truly unique. I not only take my work projects into the classroom, but I also learn new and innovative ways to be more effective on the job everyday."

**Tod Waddell, CPA
MBA STUDENT
FALL '93**

With most MBA programs you get a degree. With ours, you get ahead. An MBA from Franklin University can really make a difference, because it's a different kind of degree. That's because we started from scratch, asking CEOs and business leaders what an MBA should be. With their help, we've created an innovative 24-month program that addresses the key issues in today's business environment. We also offer flexible scheduling with fall, winter and summer admission.

To find out the facts about this unique program, please join us for Information Sessions on the evenings of Sept. 26 or Oct. 5. Call the MBA Office at 341-6387 to reserve your seat.

CALL 341-6387

FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
THE MBA PROGRAM

201 South Grant Avenue • Columbus, Ohio 43215-5399

**MBA
Information
Sessions:
Sept. 26 or
Oct. 5
Ross
Auditorium
Alumni Hall
301 E. Rich St.**

HOME
FINAL

The Columbus Disp



SOME SUN
High 70/Low 50
Details/10C

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 18, 1995

35 Cents

Druggists urged to protest

Insurance practices hurt independent stores, group says

By Bernie Karako
Dispatch Staff Reporter

Independent pharmacies could go the way of the mom-and-pop service station or may be the elixir to help make medical care economical and effective.

What happens, say some, may depend on insurance companies.

Todd Dankmyer, vice president of the National Association of Retail Druggists, wants to "sound a nationwide alarm against the anti-consumer practices of the health insurance industry."

He is encouraging independent druggists across the country to stage a "High Noon for your local pharmacy" protest Wednesday.

At noon that day, pharmacists are encouraged to hold rallies, dim the lights in their stores, call news conferences, drape the prescription counter in black and wear black armbands to underscore their concern over customers' insurance coverage, Dankmyer said.

The druggists group contends that consumers are being denied the freedom to patronize the pharmacy of their choice because health plans require them to fill prescriptions at chain-operated pharmacies.

Insurance companies don't plan an opposing rally.

"We don't want to be confrontational. We will not do anything to counter High Noon demonstrations," said Mark Petrucci, pharma-

Fragile Lives: The appeal

■ Tuesday: A final push
■ Wednesday: Decision time



places Lauren in her wheelchair at the family's apartment in West Chester, Ohio. Chris Russell / Dispatch

A revealing report

By Michael J. Berens
Dispatch Staff Reporter

■ n mid-December and quite by accident

Father discovers

For eight months, The Dispatch followed the extraordinary lives of Lauren, Dale Jr. and Kathleen, three severely disabled children whose

Serbs get deadline extension

■ They have 3 more days to pull their heavy weapons back from Sarajevo.

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — In view of the Bosnian Serbs' genuine effort to pull their big guns away from Sarajevo, Western officials yesterday gave the rebels another 72-hour reprieve from devastating air attacks.

At the same time, the Serbs were trying to fight off an advance by government troops in western Bosnia. Thousands of refugees fleeing the fighting choked the roads leading to the Serbian stronghold of Banja Luka.

International mediators were trying to incorporate the shifting battle lines into their plans. They said the government's advance on Banja Luka could draw Serbia, the major power in the region, into the fighting.

"The next few days and hours may determine the fate of the war," U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke said.

In Zagreb, Croatia, the U.N. and NATO commanders said they had lifted a deadline of 10 p.m. (4 p.m. EDT) yesterday because the Serbs were showing "initial compliance" with demands to pull heavy weapons back at least 12½ miles from Sarajevo.

"Therefore, we agreed that the suspension of the airstrikes be ex-

and the U.N. commander, Lt. Gen. Bernard Janvier of France.

The new deadline expires at 10 p.m. (4 p.m. EDT) Wednesday.

The statement didn't say how many weapons the Serbs had withdrawn by last night, but Bosnian government radio put the figure at about 150. The Serbs were thought to have had about 300 heavy weapons in place.

"The additional 72 hours will permit the Bosnian Serbs to completely relocate their heavy weapons beyond the limits of the Sarajevo TEZ (total exclusion zone)," the statement said.

Smith and Janvier indicated one of their next steps would be to bring together Serbian and Bosnian government commanders to discuss a cease-fire around Sarajevo.

The NATO and U.N. commanders have warned that if the Serbs don't keep their promise, or attack within the zone around Sarajevo, airstrikes will resume.

The commander of Serbian troops around Sarajevo, Gen. Dragomir Milosevic, said that by 6:30 p.m. (12:30 p.m. EDT), half of the weapons had been removed, and the rest would be out by Wednesday night.

In western Bosnia, Serbian forces melted away before an offensive by troops of the Muslim-led government.

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic wouldn't say how far government forces might go. But he said he believed that for the first time in

st consultant in sales and market-
g for Aetna Life Insurance.

The druggists association con-
nds that health insurance compa-
es' practices are eroding health
re.

"Insurance companies are dic-
ting how, when and where patients
ceive pharmacists' care. The policy
based on insurers' short-term
rofit considerations rather than
ng-term health care of patients,"
ankmyer said.

But the spokesman for Aetna
id it's not always easy for insur-
ce companies to use the smaller
armacies.

"We want to work with indepen-
ent pharmacists, but they will have
evolve into different businesses
ith new programs," Petruzzi said.

The family-owned pharmacies
unnot meet the demands of the
surance companies and make a
rofit, the druggists group said.

The organization's records show
at 40 independent pharmacies
ross the country close each week.
he number of businesses dropped
less than 35,000 last year, from
3,000 in 1990.

Rinaldo Brusadin once owned
ur Columbus pharmacies. He
osed his last one in 1991.

He now is a professor at Ohio
ate University and a national lec-
urer on the future of pharmacies.

Brusadin estimates there are 24
, 36 single-store pharmacies in
ranklin County. Additional mini-
ains, like the one he owned, would
use the total to 60 or 70 indepen-
ent stores, he said. That's half the
umber of stores that operated five
, seven years ago in the county, he
aid.

One of the 25 issues that the
ruggists group wants insurance
mpanies to address is the practice
f paying pharmacists to counsel
atients.

Traditionally, pharmacists have
ffered their knowledge to patrons
: no charge, Brusadin said.

"If a customer wanted to know
hat kind of cough syrup to take, or
hether a rash is serious enough to
ee a doctor or if an over-the-counter
edicine could cause a serious inter-
action with another drug, the inde-
endent pharmacist was there to
elp," Brusadin said.

That could change. Petruzzi said
etna is experimenting with pilot
rojects in which independent phar-
macists get paid to do diagnostic
ork.

Brusadin said he agrees with
e concept but wonders who will
ay. If even some of the cost is billed
o the patient, the friendly neighbor-
ood druggist may no longer be seen
s friendly, he said.

learned horrible secrets
about himself.

He spotted the manila folder
while visually prowling the
conference table at a hearing in
which he was appealing the state's
decision to cancel his daughter's
Medicaid benefits.

"May I see that?" asked during a recess, pointing to the
bulging file marked with his name.

To his surprise, a hearing official nodded approval and also
agreed — after had braved good fortune with a second
request — to copy dozens of pages from it.

After the hearing, went to his apartment in the
Cincinnati suburb of West Chester, Ohio, and tossed the copies on
a table near his father, who was in town from Kentucky to
baby-sit.

When returned the next day, his father was waiting in
the living room, the copies in hand.

"Have you read these?" asked, his voice betraying
urgency. "I think you better take a look."

His son began to scan the pages, confident that they contained
little more than medical updates about his young daughter,
Lauren, who has cerebral palsy and many other ailments,
including blindness and mental retardation.

"Oh, my God," he cried as his eyes met the words.

"Lauren is frequently found with stool from head to toe (and
in her mouth."

"Parents refuse to allow her access to the house, and she
remains in bed with a barrier to prevent her escape."

The 18-page report, among other pages, had been prepared by
private nursing supervisor Linda Elliott-Amann, whose agency

Please see **REPORT PAGE 2A**

inflammatory file during hearing

parents care for them
at home.

Home health care
carries a steep price —
both financial and
emotional — but these
families believe it
outweighs all other
options. Their
commitment forces them
to negotiate — and battle
— a Medicaid system that
controls their ability to
provide that care.

In a four-day series
continuing today, three
reporters and three
photographers chronicle
the fragile lives of these
families — the turbulence,
the joy, the successes and
the failures.

Inside:

■ Seeking normal
times: Dale Sapp Jr.
is treated to his first
ride on a horse, and
Kathleen Biel joins a
Brownie troop / **6-7C**

said the statement by the NATO
commander, Adm. Leighton Smith, Please see **BOSNIA Page 2A**



Associated Press

Bosnian Serb soldiers wave three-fingered salutes as their tank withdraws from
the Sarajevo area.

TODAY'S TOP STORIES

NATION & WORLD

Hurricane Marilyn has moved on,
leaving the island of St. Thomas a
smashed and looted ruin / **3A**

ACCENT ON CHOICES

Contrary to popular belief, Ameri-
cans are working less, not more, and
spending more time at play, a timely
new study says / **1B**

THE ARTS

First impressions are important,
and that goes for books as much as it
does for people. A great first sen-
tence can mean the difference be-
tween a classic and a clunker / **8B**

SPORTS

The Bengals are no longer unbeaten
after a 24-21 loss to the Seahawks,
but the Browns bring home a 14-7
victory over the Houston Oilers / **1D**

BUSINESS TODAY

If you own a T-shirt or other cloth-
ing embroidered with the logo of a
college or a pro sports team, it proba-
bly was made by 5-B's Inc. / **Page 1**



John Barker gives bride Diane
Winters a kiss at the conclusion
of their horseback wedding.
Story on **Page 1C**.

INDEX

Class...Secs. C-E	Obituaries.....	4C
Comics.....	People.....	2B
Editorials.....	Puzzles.....	4B
Forum.....	Television.....	7B
Horoscope.....	Theaters.....	6B
Lottery.....	Vitals.....	5C

CD SAYS:

Face it. We don't care what money
looks like; we just want some.

New bills will mean big change U.S. currency to get rare face lift to deter counterfeiting

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a
move to thwart counterfeiters,
American currency is about to get a
high-tech overhaul — its first major
change in 66 years.

Existing bills will remain in cir-
culation.

The changeover will begin early
next year with the \$100 bill, a
favorite of forgers.

The biggest change will be to
enlarge Benjamin Franklin's por-
trait and shift it off center to make
room for a second portrait — a
watermark engraving visible when
the bill is held to light.

The watermark, added as a se-
curity precaution, is extremely dif-
ficult to duplicate. Treasury officials
have not said which historical figure
will be portrayed in the watermark.

Eventually, there will be similar
redesigns on nearly all smaller de-
nominations.

The exception could be the \$2
bill. No decision has been made on
whether to alter the largely com-
memorative bill.

Treasurer Mary Ellen Withrow
has said borders on the new bills will

be simplified, with geometric de-
signs replaced by lines and dots.

Also, color-shifting ink will be
used so the greenback will take on a
different hue when viewed from an
angle. And government printers
might use computer-designed pat-
terns that are
made to turn
wavy when cop-
ied improperly.

About \$390
billion in U.S.
paper currency
is in circulation,
some two-thirds
in foreign coun-
tries.

The Secret Service has said
there may be three times as much
counterfeiting conducted abroad as
in the United States. There have
been reports, questioned by the
Clinton administration, that Iran is
distributing counterfeit bills.

Robert Leuver, a former direc-
tor of the U.S. Bureau of Engraving
and Printing, doubts anti-counter-
feiting measures will work as long as

old-style bills remain in circulation.

"If they exist as legal tender,
people can counterfeit them," he
said. "You copy whatever is easy to
counterfeit."

U.S. officials decided not to re-
call old bills because it could disrupt
foreign econo-
mies. For-
eigners tend to
be reluctant to
turn in old bills,
fearing taxes
and devaluation.

Russia, for
example, is be-
lieved to have
the largest supply of dollars outside
the United States.

The last major change in U.S.
currency was in 1929, when bills
were reduced in size and given a
uniform look. Congress added the
words "In God We Trust" in 1957.

Some small changes were intro-
duced in 1990: a microscopic line of
type and a polyester thread visible
when a bill is held to light.

*The last major change in
U.S. currency was in 1929,
when bills were reduced in
size and given a uniform
look.*



This newspaper is printed
on recycled paper
and is recyclable.

REPORT from 1A

contracted with the Ohio Department of Human Services to oversee Lauren's home nursing care.

"Lies! Lies! Lies!" [redacted] shouted.

The report also leveled subtle criticisms at [redacted] and his fiancée, [redacted].

"Dad states he has been unable to schedule any appointments or become involved as he would like since he works 60-70 hours per week. He states that he and his common-law wife do not have a life."

The report noted that [redacted] was "overwhelmed" when caring for Lauren and her two sons — [redacted] then 6, and [redacted] 5 months.

Weaved among medication notes, Elliott-Amann's observations seemed almost spylake.

"Dad asking for increased (nursing) hours to allow family time to be out together. (Nurse told me privately, after the meeting, that they are never home.)"

The bottom of each page carried either [redacted] or [redacted] signature. Anyone reading the report would believe that one of them had read the accusations and signed in agreement.

Elliott-Amann, [redacted] deduced, must have returned to her office after visiting [redacted] home and added the comments on the pages.

The appeal hearing days before suddenly entered [redacted] mind. He replayed the details from memory, finding new meaning in the awkward glances and critical comments he had confronted.

A LONG-DISTANCE HEARING

Click-click.

A tabletop speaker telephone came to life with the voice of Ceil Zurick, an administrator for the state Department of Human Services, who was 100 miles to the north in her Columbus office.

[redacted] closed his eyes in disbelief. He was with two officials at the

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, she said.

Zurick acknowledged that the options waiver has a waiting list of 7,828 people and that Lauren might be 10 years from benefits.

Pending a decision within a few months, Lauren would continue to receive home nursing and benefits.

"Thank you," Zurick's voice concluded.

Click-click.

A CURIOUS VISIT

With Christmas just days away, [redacted] had temporarily freed himself of his depression about the appeal and shock over the report when a knock at his front door shattered the protective holiday spirit.

"Hello, I'm with Butler County Child Protective Services," the woman said.

[redacted] paled as she explained

THE STATE'S FAX

Since his appeal hearing, [redacted] had been calling the governor's office seeking intervention.

The Department of Human Services became aware of the calls soon after the holidays. In February, a two-page fax was sent from the department with a caution in bold type: "HEADS UP ON LAUREN"

Department officials say they aren't sure who received the fax, although a handwritten note on one page shows that it was sent Feb. 23 to the offices of Gov. George V. Voinovich and William T. Ryan, deputy director of Medicaid for Human Services.

The note bears the signature of Ceil Zurick, the department administrator who had presided over [redacted] appeal hearing.

After receiving a tip from a friend who is employed by a Butler County agency that works with children, [redacted] discovered that the fax also had been sent to that agency and a similar one in the county.

He obtained copies of the fax through a public-records request for his file at the Butler County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

Though Human Services already had discounted the private-duty nurse's report, the department fax quoted the allegations. The fax also defended the cancellation of Lauren's Medicaid benefits and, in the last paragraph, noted that foster-care options were being explored.

Human Services officials said the fax does not appear in state files on Lauren [redacted] and does not represent an official department action.

Ryan does not recall receiving the fax, he said, nor does anyone at the governor's office.

Zurick was unavailable for comment.

Dispatch, Sharp said Elliott-Amann's monthly case-management report was "based on the reported observations of nursing professionals" and on the "personal observation" of Elliott-Amann in [redacted] home.

The parents' signature on the reports is required by Human Services to verify the monthly visits, Sharp said. Some statements written or typed in the report were added after [redacted] or [redacted] signed the pages, she said.

[redacted] or [redacted] signature does not indicate that the parents agreed with the report or that they had seen everything written in it, Sharp said.

Though references to "stool" and "barriers" might be interpreted by [redacted] as accusations, she said, the comments were intended as neutral nursing notes.

The report, [redacted] and [redacted] believe, clearly implies that the family neglected Lauren. "I had no idea that everything I said was secretly written down," [redacted] said.

The report does not mention that [redacted] plans to marry [redacted] within a few months. They have been waiting for an ebb in the tide that seems to only rise.

"It's really hard," [redacted] said. "I'm not Lauren's mother, but I'm treating her like she is mine. I have two sons in addition to Lauren — and Lauren is a one-person show."

Yes, life is overwhelming, [redacted] acknowledged. She told Elliott-Amann as much, but the remark was one any mother might make on any day. Now the admission was being used as evidence against the family.

Lauren sometimes reaches down into a dirty diaper like a gun-fighter on the draw, then smears herself, [redacted] said.

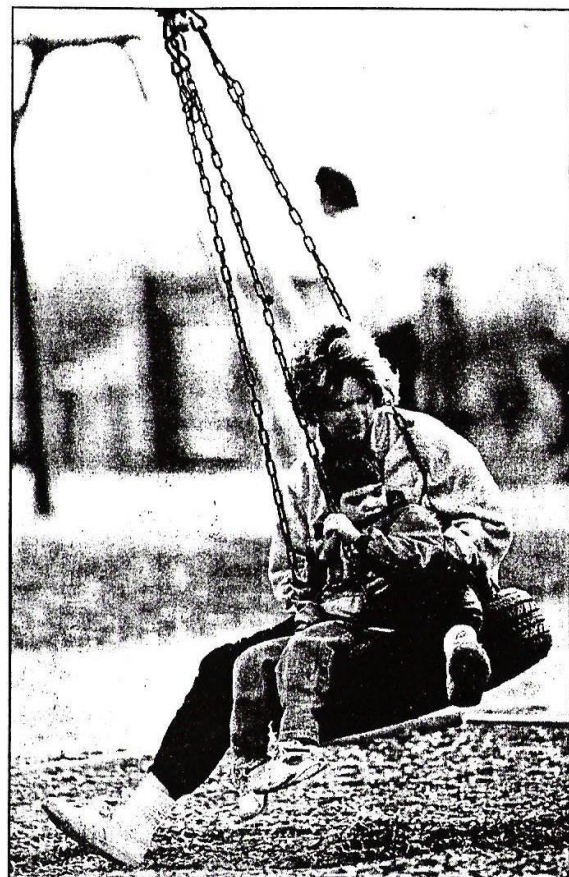
"How can you stop this? You can't. It's part of the challenge of having a child like this."

Lauren's bed, indeed, is unusual: Her mattress, placed on the floor, is surrounded by padded, 4-foot walls made of wood. But [redacted] designed the bed with heart — as a way to protect Lauren.

Shorter walls would enable Lauren to hoist herself to freedom in the middle of the night and possibly stumble down the stairs.

A SIMPLE QUESTION

Since leaving a job at [redacted] to become a manager for [redacted]



Chris Russell / Dispatch

Nurse Kris Morris plays with Lauren [redacted] on a school playground.

[redacted] near Dayton, [redacted] has been working 50-plus hours a week. Lauren's needs quickly consume his \$32,000 annual salary.

[redacted] desire to be with Lauren has cost him promotion opportunities in a retail career in which the customer is always first.

Though the sacrifice was voluntary, [redacted] and [redacted] dream of a normal life. They wish for a morning of carefree slumber the way other families covet a Hawaiian vacation.

The couple's apartment, sparsely furnished and neat, is dominated by [redacted] homemade desk — a sheet of wood atop two file cabinets — that supports his papers, books and computer in a corner of the

living room.

Two couches, a television and a videocassette recorder, a playpen and a basic dinette set fill the smallish rooms.

A home is not what's inside it, [redacted] said, but what's inside the people who live there.

"The state is making it very difficult for us to keep our child in our home," she said. "The state suggested foster care. Well, we have a family; we have a nice place to live; we have everything we need right here."

"Why can't we keep Lauren here?"

department's Butler County office near his home on Dec. 12. Zurick — both judge and jury of the appeal — was half a state away.

There is nothing human about this hearing, he thought.

He spoke to the machine.

Lauren is a fragile but active 7-year-old whose cerebral palsy has left her with the physical and mental power of a 2-year-old at best, he explained. She requires home nursing care, which enables him to work and support Lauren, and their two other children.

Zurick acknowledged that Lauren is severely disabled but said she is not sick enough to qualify for Human Services' Medically Fragile Waiver, which provides money for home nursing through Medicaid for children needing daily medical care.

Lauren, who is medically stable, instead qualifies for the Individual Options Waiver, offered through the

deu, which he had handicapped years ago with high safety rails made of wood.

"Consider this complaint closed," she said before leaving.

Protective Services later confirmed that the allegation of neglect was unfounded.

Months later, would discover that Human Services had investigated the allegations in the nurse's report and concluded that they were without merit. Human Services officials say they are compelled by law to report evidence of abuse to a child protective agency. The state filed no such report in the case, state records obtained by *The Dispatch* show.

Still, remained uneasy about the allegations — fearful that, though baseless, they might be used against him.

His concern would prove well-founded.

Joseph Silver, senior staff attorney for the department, said federal privacy laws prohibit the state from commenting on the case.

At *The Dispatch's* request, and signed a letter authorizing Human Services to release files or comment on any aspect of the case.

Even with the family's permission, Silver said, the department cannot comment.

THE HARSH REALITIES

and hesitate to discuss the nursing report for fear that the lies will shadow their lives.

Elliott-Amann is traveling out of state and unavailable for comment, said Susan Sharp, administrator of Primary Care Professional Management Services of Cincinnati, the nursing agency for which Elliott-Amann works.

In a written statement to *The*

30%-50% & more off custom window treatments

Call for an appointment this week and get an additional 10% off sale price.



30% off custom draperies.

Choose from a vast selection of fabrics from decorative prints to seamless sheers in a wide array of colors.

- 50% & more off on Levolor custom aluminum 1" or micro-half inch slat blinds in a wide range of colors.
- 50% and more off Levolor wood slat blinds in 1" or 2" widths. Painted or stained.
- 50% off on custom cellular shades from our collection of designs and colors.
- 50% off Louver Drape® custom verticals. Rotates and traverses for privacy and light control.

Let our staff work wonders with your windows. Call our Shop-at-Home Service. We'll visit your home, show samples and give a complimentary, no obligation estimate.

Columbus, 621-6147

Custom Treatments D936

Regular and/or original prices appearing in this ad reflect offering prices which may or may not have resulted in actual sales.

LAZARUS

BOSNIA from 1A

control of the situation.

Bosnian Serb leaders had resisted previous demands to pull about 300 heavy weapons out of the zone, preferring instead to hunker down under the NATO bombing campaign.

Holbrooke made a deal with President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, who has been negotiating for the Bosnian Serbs, to withdraw only certain large-caliber weapons. That angered the Bosnian government.

Terms reported Friday included only mortars bigger than 82mm

and artillery bigger than 100mm. Previously, the United Nations and NATO insisted on withdrawal of all guns over 12.7mm.

But U.N. spokesman Lt. Col. Chris Vernon said yesterday the Serbs had been told that they must remove 82mm mortars and 100mm artillery as well.

A U.S. peace initiative tentatively accepted by the warring parties would give a confederation of Bosnian Muslims and Croats 51 percent of Bosnia and the Serbs 49 percent.

The rebels held nearly 70 per-

cent of Bosnia just several months ago but now hold about 55 percent. That could make agreement on the 51-49 formula easier, but differences remain on who would receive what.

Meanwhile yesterday, several hundred die-hard Communists and Russian nationalists protested outside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, angered by the NATO bombing raids.

Russia has accused NATO of "genocide" against the Serbs, its traditional Slav allies in the Balkans.

THE ORIGINAL MATTRESS FACTORY

WE MAKE MATTRESSES RIGHT... RIGHT IN OUR STORE

- Super Savings • Excellent Quality
- Custom Sizes • Waterbed Replacements
- Over 150 Years Experience
- Immediate Availability • Open 7 Days

- Adjustable Beds, Beds, Headboards, Daybeds, Frames, Futons

Conveniently located: **851 West Fifth Avenue**

Between Grandview Ave. & Olentangy River Rd.

291-8844

BUY A MATTRESS AT OUR FACTORY SAVE... DIRECT TO YOU ELIMINATE THE MIDDLEMAN



HOURS:
M-F 9-8
Sat 10-6
Sun 12-5

Tour The Factory

Phone Orders Accepted

FACTORY STORES

Cleveland at Morse
Northeast corner next to Pearl
475-3900

Newark/Heath
Cross Creek / Walmart Center
522-1123

Lancaster
Next to Burger King
1736 N. Memorial Dr. 681-1401

Chillicothe
Across the Street from Hills
982 Bridge St. 773-7497

SUNNY
High 76/Low 58
Details/EC

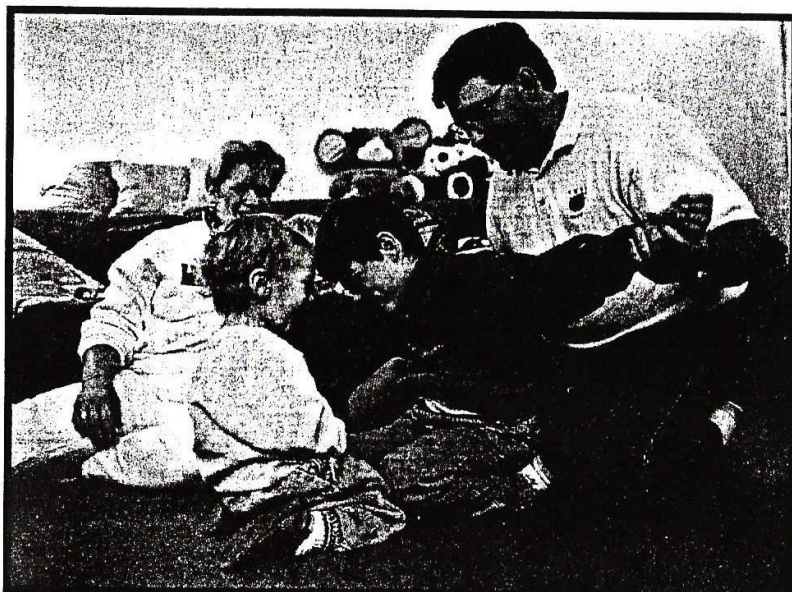
TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 19, 1995

35 Cents

Fragile Lives: A final push

■ Wednesday: Decision time



Chris Russell / Dispatch

With support from her father, 7-year-old Lauren [redacted] bonds with her half brother, [redacted] and his fiancée, [redacted] enjoy the children's connection.

With appeal denied,
father scrambles
to find last-minute help

Hope running out

For eight months, The Dispatch followed the extraordinary lives of Lauren, Dale Jr. and Kathleen, three severely disabled children whose parents came

By Michael J. Berens
Dispatch Staff Reporter

■ Lauren [redacted] fumbled through her blindness before nestling into the perfect cuddling spot on her father's chest and

Dioxin dips since plant's closing

Levels on South Side drop 46 percent

By Scott Powers
Dispatch Environment Reporter

Dioxin levels in the air have dropped in most South Side areas around the former trash-burning power plant since the incinerator was closed last December, a study has found.

Ambient air samples taken in May and June by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency found significant drops in dioxin levels in the air at three places near the plant, slight drops at two other places and an increase in a sixth place, compared with similar tests done in April and May of 1994.

The new study's results say three things:

■ People living on the South Side now have less health risk from dioxin than before the plant closed.

■ The trash plant was responsible for much of the dioxin found in the air, an assumption many officials were reluctant to accept before.

■ There remain other significant sources of dioxin in the area.

Dioxin is a toxic mixture of chemicals that can be created through incomplete burning of materials containing chlorine. It is considered a probable cancer-causing agent at very low levels, and also has been associated with other health problems.

Ohio EPA officials cautioned that the 1994 and 1995 measure-

ments do not compare easily because the wind generally was blowing in different directions. That helps explain why one place almost due north of the plant, in Berliner Park, actually saw an increase in dioxin this year, said Paul Koval, supervisor of the EPA's air toxics unit.

Still, when all six test locations are added together, the total dioxin level dropped 46 percent since 1994.

"This reinforces the common-sense answer — that the trash plant was a source of dioxin," Koval said.

Previously, that answer was not taken for granted by some city officials, even though measurements taken inside the trash plant's smokestacks in 1992 and 1994 had found very high dioxin levels in the exhaust gases.

Until now, officials only had computer models to suggest that the dioxin coming up the smokestacks was great enough to actually pollute the neighborhood air.

"It does appear that the solid-waste facility does have a measurable impact," said Michael J. Pompili, assistant Columbus health commissioner for environmental health. "We have been committed to doing the objective science, and this is a part of this process."

Grove City resident Teresa Mills, a leader of a citizens group that has long been critical of the plant, said the findings should be a warning to anyone thinking about

reopening it.

Columbus has been considering selling the plant.

"You have possibly one of the largest known sources of dioxin in the country; you close it, and you would expect a decrease," she said. "And in fact you have it."

The biggest drop was recorded in air samples taken at the Scioto Trail Elementary School, which is about a mile east of the plant, at 2951 S. High St.

In 1994, the dioxin levels recorded there were the area's highest — more than five times higher than background levels found in rural air. The 1995 tests saw an 85 percent decrease in the dioxin levels outside the school. Now the school's dioxin levels are just slightly higher than background levels.

Those areas more to the east of the plant saw the greatest drops in dioxin levels — due to the fact that the 1994 tests had wind blowing to the east, while the 1995 tests had wind blowing to the north.

At its worst, the 1994 dioxin levels represented about two or three additional cancer deaths among every million people exposed, the Ohio EPA estimated. The 1995 levels represent about one more cancer death per million.

"We would like to stress that the (dioxin) levels at the school, while higher than the others, were not deemed to be a big risk," in 1994, Koval said. "And, if anything, the risk has gone down that proportional amount."

'Home-grown' breast tissue could take place of silicone

for them at home. Home health care carries a steep price — both financial and emotional — but these families believe it outweighs all other options. Their commitment forces them to negotiate — and battle — a Medicaid system that controls their ability to provide that care. In a four-day series continuing today, three reporters and three photographers chronicle the fragile lives of these families — the turbulence, the joy, the successes and the failures.

Inside:

■ Trying times: The stress of caring for a disabled child puts relationships to the test / 45C

shrieking, "Ca-caaa!" "I think she knows that I'm her father," said softly, gently rocking his upper body. "I'll never know for sure, though."

There are times — such as this day in March — when he is grateful that his 7-year-old daughter's cerebral palsy and mental retardation make her oblivious to the world.

"Ca-caaa!" Lauren yelled again, wrapping her arms and legs tightly around her dad while struggling for control against spastic muscles.

"Damn, all I want to do is keep her at home," insisted [redacted] sitting on the floor of his Cincinnati-area apartment with his fiancée, [redacted], and their two boys, [redacted].

Smiling broadly and still being held by her father, Lauren leaned forward as she and [redacted] foreheads came together. The two seemed to share a moment of silent communication.

[redacted] had no way of telling Lauren about the guilt he was feeling.

Three weeks earlier, in mid-February, he learned that the Ohio Department of Human Services had denied his appeal to

Please see HOPE Page 2A

COULD TAKE PLACE OF SILICONE

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — While lawyers battle over the dangers of silicone breast implants, scientists are exploring a startling procedure that uses a woman's own cells to create tissue inside the breasts — in effect, a "grow-your-own" alternative.

The experimentation is years behind other substitutes for silicone that use vegetable fats and oils, but supporters note that this technique doesn't permanently leave foreign substances in the body.

"We've been trying to outsmart the body's immune system. These fellows have come up with a concept that works with it," said James Martin, research director at Carolinas Medical Center. The experiments were begun last fall at the Charlotte, N.C.-based hospital and at the Uni-

■ Women rally for a settlement and implant research / 5A

versity of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Silicone has been blamed by hundreds of thousands of women for serious immune system diseases. In 1992, the Food and Drug Administration banned purely cosmetic silicone implants; the procedure is still available for cancer and other medical reasons.

If early work on laboratory animals succeeds, the researchers, within three to five years, will remove a tissue sample from somewhere in a woman's body, use it to grow additional cells in the lab, then implant the cells in the woman's breast. There they should multiply

and mature into breast tissue.

The only comparable procedure involves removing a woman's abdominal tissue to reconstruct breasts, an operation that is complicated, risky and often causes scarring, said Dr. Michael Miller, an associate professor of plastic surgery at the University of Texas Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

The researchers' aim is to help women who have undergone mastectomies after breast cancer. But the method also could be used for cosmetic breast enlargements.

This year, the scientists are trying the treatment in laboratory rats. Next year, they plan to try it on pigs.

The Charlotte and Ann Arbor

Please see BREAST Page 2A

TODAY'S TOP STORIES

NATION & WORLD

The Washington Post published today the unaltered manifesto of the serial killer known as the Unabomber in the hope of ending his 17-year campaign of murder / 3A

ACCENT

A Columbus designer has come up with Adornables, a line of children's wear sold to consultants who decorate the garments, then market them at craft shows / 1B

THE ARTS

The Lovely Liebowitz Sisters share a delusion, but that's part of the charm of the play by that name opening Wednesday at the Riffe Center's Capitol Theatre / 8B

METRO

A suspect on trial for the second time in the 1992 slaying of a Dairy Mart clerk was freed yesterday when a key prosecution witness recanted her testimony / 1C

Richard Hogue's 50 years on the job as a Westerville mail carrier are worth a mention in his honor today / 1C

BUSINESS

Sun Television and Appliances closed its Lane Avenue store Saturday, and confirmed that it won't be an anchor for the planned Lennox retail complex / 1D



Purses to hide handguns are the new accessory in Arizona, where it's now OK to carry a concealed weapon. Story on Page 6A.

SPORTS

Eicaris Ruman Coke is still entered in Thursday's Little Brown Jug at Delaware, despite being hit by a car Sunday night / 1F

INDEX

Class...Secs. E,F
Comics...4,5B
Editorials...8A
Horoscope...4B
Lottery...10D
Obituaries...9D
People...2B
Puzzles...4B
Stocks...3-5,7,8D
Television...7B
Theaters...6B
Vitals...10D

CD SAYS:

The way some purses are loaded, you'd never be able to find your gun.

As Serbs totter, U.S. peace effort teeters

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Bosnian government and Croatian forces inflicted more losses on the Serbs yesterday, but their success at capturing huge swaths of territory threatened to wreck weeks of work by U.S. peace mediators.

Bosnian TV said the anti-Serb alliance seized 36 square miles around Mount Ozren in central Bosnia, adding to the 2,400 square miles — just over 12 percent of Bosnia — they say they've captured in the past week.

In the northwest, a battle was under way for control of Serb-held Prijedor, said Bosnia's ambassador to Croatia, Kasim Trnka. Earlier in the day, hospital officials in Prijedor said artillery firing from Croatia hit Serbian refugee camps north of town, killing seven people.

A U.N. peacekeeper from Denmark was killed in fighting between Serbs and Croatian soldiers who crossed into northwestern Bosnia near Bihac, the United Nations said. It said nine peacekeepers were wounded, but it wasn't clear who fired the artillery shells that hit them.

The government forces, with help from neighboring Croatia, are making their biggest advances of the 3½-year-old war against the Serbs. But mediators are afraid the Serbs' losses could drive them away from talks on a peace settlement, or even prompt Serb-dominated Yugoslavia to plunge its army into the war to rescue them.

In addition, the gains by Croatian forces have rekindled fears among Muslims of being squeezed out by Croats and Serbs.

U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke, whose shuttle diplomacy across the Balkans had brought new hopes of peace, was visibly dispirited yesterday. After meeting with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, the region's most powerful figure, Holbrooke acknowledged that there was only "a little progress."



Associated Press

Bosnians celebrate what they consider the imminent fall of Sanski Most, a target in the joint offensive.

A member of Milosevic's delegation, which is negotiating for the Bosnian Serbs, said the two sides are far from reaching an agreement.

Bosnian Serbs, armed and encouraged by Milosevic, captured about 70 percent of Bosnia after the war broke out in April 1992. The current peace plan calls for their share of Bosnia's territory to be reduced to 49 percent of the country, but after the losses they may hold less than that.

Banja Luka, the Serbs' northern stronghold,

is important not only in battlefield strategy but because it is an industrial center.

The Serbs, who have acknowledged heavy losses, said they have stabilized defensive lines and will defend Banja Luka, which is jammed with tens of thousands of refugees.

Some Croatian and government leaders are buoyantly talking of attacking Banja Luka, and ignoring the plans for a 51-49 split of Bosnia with the Serbs.



This newspaper is printed on recycled paper and is recyclable.

have Lauren reinstated to its Medicaid waiver program.

Department officials had re-evaluated Lauren's enrollment in the program late last year and determined that, based on the rules, she wasn't sick enough to qualify.

The appeal represented one last hope for [redacted] but its rejection meant that he would no longer receive money for his daughter's home nursing care — and, in effect, could no longer afford to care for Lauren.

Like many other parents of sick children, [redacted] believes that the state has enough money, if properly managed, to provide home medical care for every disabled child in Ohio.

But William T. Ryan, deputy director of Medicaid for Human Services, says the state cannot afford to help every disabled child, forcing the department to help the sickest based on federal guidelines.

Lauren is trapped between the opposing viewpoints — severely disabled by public standards but not sick enough by state standards.

The way [redacted] sees it, the system defies logic.

During the previous year, the waiver program — a combination of federal and state money — paid about \$45,000 for Lauren's nursing care. For 39 hours a week, a nurse watched Lauren while [redacted] worked and [redacted] cared for the boys.

According to state estimates, institutional care for Lauren would cost Medicaid at least \$55,000 annually.

"It's almost like the state is doing everything they can to get her out of the house," [redacted] said. "Why can't they just give me the money they plan on spending anyway?"

[redacted] was beyond desperate as he called dozens of state officials in search of a last-minute reprieve.

When his efforts failed, he turned to the woman who had helped him before — Cindy Carpenter, the mother of a disabled daughter who lives 15 miles away in the neighboring suburb of Fairfield, Ohio.

[redacted] acknowledging a sense of overwhelming guilt, told Carpenter that he was contemplating what once was unthinkable: placing Lauren in an institution.

A HELPING HAND

Carpenter is a rapid-fire talker whose wit and barbs find targets with equal precision.

Her political adeptness has earned her respect — and sometimes fear — among state officials, who quickly discovered that she is no

Where to get help

Parents of disabled children face a maze of bureaucracy in seeking help. Here are some starting points for deciphering the Medicaid waiver system and finding services:

SUPPORT GROUPS

■ The ARC of Ohio

1335 Dublin Rd., Suite 205-C
Columbus, Ohio 43215
487-4720 or 800-875-2723

The 44-year-old parent-based advocacy group is linked to a statewide and national network of offices.

AGENCIES

■ Easter Seals

565 Children's Dr. W.
P.O. Box 7166
Columbus, Ohio 43205
228-5523

The nonprofit organization offers programs and information to parents of disabled children.

■ Families for Acceptable Care and Treatment, or FACT

1335 Dublin Rd., Suite 126-D
Columbus, Ohio 43215
228-5523

The family support and advocacy group meets monthly and seeks public and legislative attention for disabled children.

■ Ohio Department of Health's Bureau for Children With Medical Handicaps

P.O. Box 1603
Columbus, Ohio 43266
466-1700

The state agency offers a variety of diagnostic and home-based services for disabled children.

■ March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

500 W. 3rd Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43212
486-5243

The nonprofit organization offers help to parents of children with birth defects.

AGENCIES THAT PROVIDE MEDICAID WAIVERS

Parents who wish to apply for a Medicaid waiver should call county or state offices of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities or Human Services. Here are Columbus-area contacts:

■ Franklin County Human Services, 462-4000

■ Franklin County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 475-6440

■ Ohio Department of Human Services, 466-6742

■ Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 466-3814

Dispatch graphic

who later supported an increase in the number of Medicaid waivers for disabled children.

"I should have been born a man," joked Carpenter, who stands 5 feet 4.

The 37-year-old single mother balances the needs of Megan with her son, Kenny, 13, and older daughter, Shannon, 17.

"I just have a different perspective than most people. I don't even feel normal when I'm with other moms. I look at life differently than they do. I don't get all tense about expectations for my kids.

"I say, 'Hey, the kids are alive today.'"

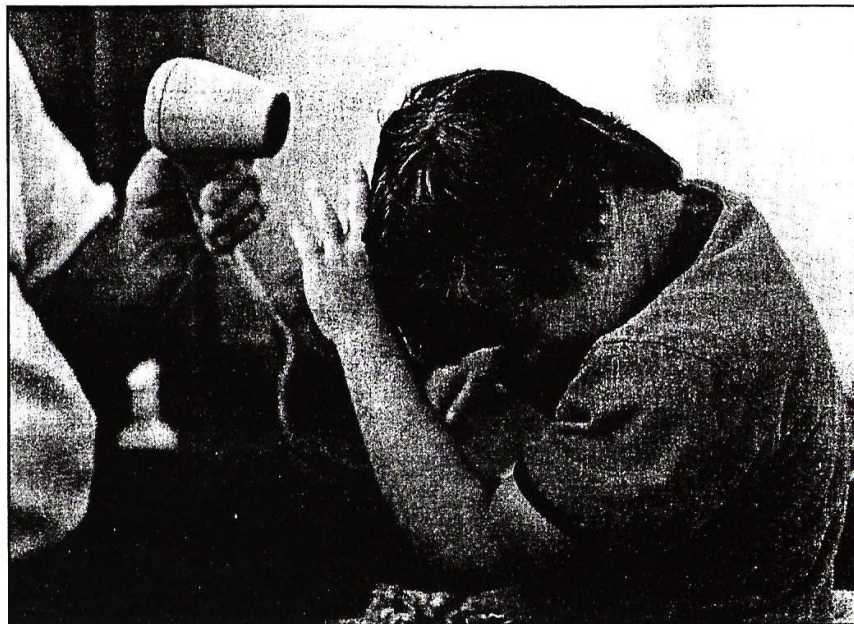
After the sit-in, state Rep. Michael A. Fox, impressed with Car-

penter had turned down [redacted] request, explaining that Lauren didn't qualify for its Medically Fragile Waiver. Other waiver programs were full, officials said.

On Sept. 21, 1993, Carpenter drafted a two-page fax — her chief weapon against the government she serves — to Jacqui Sensky, the governor's executive assistant of human services.

Carpenter noted that Lauren's cerebral palsy places her on the borderline of qualifying for the Medically Fragile Waiver, which provides nursing care at home for children who need daily medical care.

Pleading [redacted] case, she pointed out that she was working with two Butler County families who



Chris Russell/Dispatch

Lauren [redacted] gets her hair dried before school.

Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The options waiver program, however, has a 10-year waiting list.

By the time [redacted] called Carpenter the second time, his appeal was exhausted and the state's decision was made.

Carpenter told him that she could do nothing to help.

RESTRICTED BY RULES

Calling it a gesture of good will, Human Services did not immediately cancel Lauren's Medicaid benefits to give [redacted] more time to choose: foster care or institutionalization?

Sandy Sterrett, a Human Services administrator, said the agency tries to avoid sudden cancellations of benefits to give families time to make such decisions.

Each year, she said, some children who probably aren't qualified for a waiver receive benefits until the state has overwhelming evidence that these children do not meet federal guidelines for the programs.

Lauren was one of those children. Federal guidelines are stretched for "borderline" children, Sterrett said, because the state

families for at least one year.

Parents are warned that benefits could end a year later, she said.

Sterrett does not dispute that political influence has helped some parents get waivers. In the past, "the squeaky wheel got the waiver," she said, adding that cases are now handled neutrally.

Carpenter's influence was not a factor in Lauren's case, Sterrett said. The department is not happy when a child who is removed from the waiver ends up in foster care or an institution, she said.

Human Services cares about these children and works hard to find alternative funding or placement, Sterrett said, but federal rules restrict money that the heart says to give.

A NO-WIN DECISION

By early May, [redacted] was a broken man.

Hoping for a miracle, he resisted the idea of institutionalizing Lauren, but he consented to letting state officials look for a facility.

"I went to one of the institutions and looked around," [redacted] recalled. "I see these kids who are bedridden, wheelchair-bound, really pretty bad

daughter does not really belong here."

He asked himself over and over: Do I keep Lauren or give her up?

His two boys, he knew, deserve a normal childhood filled with activities such as Little League, an afternoon at the movie theater or a day at the pool — all impossible now.

His fiancée already had given two years of her life to Lauren, who would demand every minute of every day until death. His relationship with [redacted] was about to crack under the stress.

To care for Lauren at home, [redacted] would have to quit his job, give up the modest apartment for something even smaller and go on welfare to get a Medicaid card.

Could he sacrifice his life with [redacted] and the boys?

The state was offering a magic pill of sorts — one that would eliminate his family's financial troubles. All he had to do was give up Lauren.

But what about his promise to his daughter?

I will never leave you.

He had made the vow on the November night he learned that she was losing Medicaid benefits.

By May 17, he had made up his

ordinary woman.

Carpenter is the skeptic who demanded that a mild-shock skin test be conducted on her before allowing it to be performed on her 7-year-old daughter, Megan.

Though doctors swore the test wouldn't hurt, Carpenter nearly passed out from the pain. She refused to let doctors touch Megan, who is deaf and has a rare brain disorder that resembles autism.

Carpenter also is an activist who in 1991 staged a sit-in with Megan outside the Statehouse office of Gov. George V. Voinovich to protest a lack of funding for disabled children.

She won the heart of Voinovich,

and given up fighting the state and were placing their children in institutions.

"I am really tired of it," Carpenter concluded. "I hope you can help with Lauren. Her father will do a great job raising her if we can only help him a little."

Human Services reversed its decision, giving the waiver in November 1993. believes the only reason Lauren received the benefits is Carpenter's expertise.

A year later, though, the waiver was being canceled.

Human Services officials urged to apply for the Individual Options Waiver through the Ohio

The Department of Human Ser-

A REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

first called in September 1993. He had recently won custody of Lauren from his ex-wife in Kentucky and needed help from Medicaid to pay for nursing care.

The Department of Human Ser-

Bachelor finds 'divorce case' ex-asperating

Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Kevin Moore finally met his ex-wife for the first time in a Delray Beach courtroom yesterday. Only, she isn't really his ex-wife.

And now she is backing off a claim that Moore used to be her husband. But she still wants half his house.

Confused? Kevin Moore sure is.

For nearly a year Moore, a bespectacled Sunrise, Fla., man who has never been married, has been fighting Anne Victoria Moore in court. She said he was her husband for six years.

She subpoenaed his bank records, reported him for failure to pay child support and accused him of fraud.

Moore had never met the woman.

Her real "ex," Kevin Collin Moore, is 34, 6 feet 5 inches and about 230 pounds. Kevin (no middle name) Moore is 45, 5 feet 11 inches and 165 pounds.

Yesterday, the never-married Moore hoped to win a cease-and-desist order against Anne Moore.

No such luck.

Anne Moore, representing herself, dominated the proceeding. She conceded Kevin Moore of Sunrise was

not really her ex-husband. She insisted she had never claimed him as such, even though she has stated in court papers, "Kevin Moore of Sunrise IS Anne Moore's ex-husband despite his previous statement that he was not."

Anne Moore said she is entitled to half of Kevin Moore's modest Sunrise home because her real ex-husband once stated the house was actually his. Kevin Moore, the woman theorized, was "a front man, a cover man" for criminal activities by her ex-husband.

She asked Palm Beach Circuit Judge Edward Fine to lift an earlier order blocking her from the bachelor's bank records. She is also refusing to obey the judge's order to pay nearly \$1,000 Moore spent in legal fees.

After about 20 minutes, an exasperated Fine abruptly halted the proceeding, the clock having run out on his morning docket. He did not say whether the hearing will resume. Kevin Moore and his attorney, J. Philip Landsman, were equally exasperated.

"He should have done something," Moore said of the judge. "I shouldn't be driven into a divorce case that I'm not a party to."

Said Landsman: "This lady is full of crap. She's delusional. We're going to stop this lady."

BREAST from 1A

labs have licensed sales rights to a small biotechnology company, Dallas-based Reprogenesis, which is paying for some of the research.

Tissue engineering was pioneered about 12 years ago by two surgeons at Childrens Hospital in Boston, Drs. Robert Langer and Joseph Vacanti.

"You can take certain cell types, put the right ones together and give them the right cues and they tend to reorganize and form structures," Langer said.

One way to give cells such cues is to erect a "scaffold," and make the cells attach themselves to it, said David Mooney, an assistant chemical engineering professor at the University of Michigan.

Here's how it would work for breasts:

A tissue sample with cells similar to breasts — high in fat — is

removed from the thigh or abdomen. The tissue is treated with enzymes to break it down into basic cells. These cells are collected in a laboratory dish along with a solution of nutrients, where they multiply quickly.

Once there's enough of them, the cell solution is sprayed over, or dipped in, a spongelike scaffold made of a biodegradable plastic and formed in the shape of a breast implant.

The cells stick to the scaffold, which will then be implanted.

Inside the body, the cells continue to multiply, but now they start acquiring characteristics of most breast tissue — except for mammary glands that produce milk.

Capillaries start to grow into the scaffolding to feed food and oxygen to the cells.

Within weeks, the scaffold dissolves through normal body metabo-

lism, leaving only breast cells behind.

Scientists believe the cells will fill the space left for them by the scaffolding and then somehow know to stop growing.

But before the implants can be used on humans, scientists must answer such questions as these: Which are the best tissues to transplant? Which plastics make the best scaffolding? What if the cells don't grow into the right type or in the proper shape? What if enough blood vessels don't grow into the scaffold and the new cells die?

"Although this type of research is encouraging and certainly the direction we need to go in, as a practical matter I don't see it becoming a reality within 10 years' time," said Dr. David Hidalgo, chief of plastic surgery at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

wants to provide benefits to the off, and I look and say that my mind.

AS SEEN ON TV

MATTRESS WAREHOUSE

AS HEARD ON RADIO

Sealy

Posturepedic Support Only From Sealy

PRICE

ROLL-BACK

MATTRESS SALE

Serta

SIMMONS

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR PRICE ROLL-BACK MATTRESS SALE ON ALL SEALY POSTUREPEDIC, SERTA PERFECT SLEEPER AND SIMMONS BEAUTYREST MATTRESSES AT GUARANTEED LOW PRICES! PLUS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR FREE 12 MONTHS SAME AS CASH!

Serta Firm	Simmons Extra Firm	Sealy Ortho Firm	Serta Perfect Sleeper
\$36 TWIN ea.pc.	\$66 TWIN ea.pc.	\$96 TWIN ea.pc.	\$116 TWIN ea.pc.
FULL ea.pc. \$76	FULL ea.pc. \$96	FULL ea.pc. \$126	FULL ea.pc. \$146
QUEEN set \$176	QUEEN set \$226	QUEEN set \$296	QUEEN set \$396
KING set \$286	KING set \$336	KING set \$396	KING set \$546
Beautyrest Plush	Posturepedic Cushion Firm	Sealy Plush Pillowtop	Beautyrest Pillowtop
\$136 TWIN ea.pc.	\$156 TWIN ea.pc.	\$186 TWIN ea.pc.	\$226 TWIN ea.pc.
FULL ea.pc. \$176	FULL ea.pc. \$196	FULL ea.pc. \$236	FULL ea.pc. \$276
QUEEN set \$496	QUEEN set \$576	QUEEN set \$696	QUEEN set \$896
KING set \$676	KING set \$846	KING set \$996	KING set \$1096

BRASS & IRON BEDS & DAYBEDS

BRASS BEDS ROLL-BACK PRICE starting at \$99

DAYBEDS ROLL-BACK PRICE starting at \$69

BEAUTYREST PLUSH OR EXTRA-FIRM \$176 TWIN ea.pc.

FULL ea.pc. \$296

QUEEN set \$696

KING set \$996

FREE 12 MONTHS SAME AS CASH

FREE DELIVERY ON ALL SETS SOLD

FREE LAYAWAY

FREE REMOVAL OF OLD MATTRESS

ONLY \$25 WILL LAYAWAY YOUR PURCHASE FOR CHRISTMAS!

FUTON SLEEPER SOFAS

Choose from several styles and colors! starting at \$268

SOFTSIDE WATERBEDS

• SUPERB COMFORT

• PERFECT SUPPORT

• PRACTICAL BENEFITS

SPECIAL ROLL-BACK PRICE

QUEEN SIZE starting at \$376

HOURS: DAILY 10-8:30 SAT. 10-8:00 SUN. 12-5:00

MATTRESS WAREHOUSE

THE LARGEST DISCOUNT MATTRESS CHAIN IN THE MIDWEST WITH OVER 50 STORES QUALITY MATTRESS & BRASS SPECIALISTS FOR OVER 30 YEARS

SAWMILL RD. 6080 Sawmill Rd. Tuller Square Between Target & Old Country Buffet 766-1446

MORSE RD. 2270 Morse Rd. Next to Old Country Buffet & Michael's Arts & Crafts 476-4466

BRICE RD. 5755 Chantry Dr. In the Target Center Next to Best Buy 861-0186

*TO QUALIFIED BUYERS/INTEREST ACCRUES AFTER 12 MONTHS

CRP/MFR ADVERTISING

HOME
FINAL

The Columbus Dispatch



RAINY
High 72/Low 59
Details/28C

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 20, 1995

35 Cents

Schools seek loan in budget

■ The \$13.6 million would be borrowed against future tax receipts.

By Tim Doulin
Dispatch Schools Reporter

The Columbus Board of Education set in motion last night plans to borrow \$13.6 million to help balance the Columbus Public Schools' 1995-96 budget.

The board approved the \$368.1 million general fund budget for the budget year that began July 1 and voted 6-0 to request the state superintendent of instruction to allow the district to borrow against its future tax receipts.

Board President Robert W. Teater said the district can't afford to cut any more from the budget, noting that the district made about \$12.7 million in program and personnel reductions in the 1994-95 budget and cut \$12.7 million from the current budget.

"We have already cut the bare bones," Teater said. "To cut back another \$13 million would stop the progress we are trying to make in improving education for our children."

The district probably will not receive approval from the state superintendent until the state Department of Education completes a review of the district's deficit projections, interim Treasurer Ben Pittman said. The Education Department's school finance division is expected to begin its review the first of October and take up to a month to finish, Pittman said.

Fragile Lives: Decision time

A new life for Lauren

For eight months, The Dispatch followed the extraordinary lives of Lauren, Dale Jr. and Kathleen, three severely disabled children whose parents care for them at home.

Home health care carries a steep price — both financial and emotional — but these families believe it outweighs all other options. Their commitment forces them to negotiate — and battle — a Medicaid system that controls their ability to provide that care.

In a four-day series concluding today, three reporters and three photographers chronicle the fragile lives of these families — the turbulence, the joy, the successes and the failures.

By Michael J. Berens
Dispatch Staff Reporter

WITH A RESOLVED mind but uncertain heart, — pushed his daughter's wheelchair into the Heinzerling Developmental Center of Columbus, entering a fragile world where children seldom grow old.

Numb with resignation, he found himself in the lobby surrounded by the experienced smiles of nurses and administrators who were aware that he, too, had just crossed a personal threshold.

Lauren does not belong here.

— believes that his 7-year-old daughter fell victim to a tug of war between his desire to care for her at home and a mighty Medicaid system that pulled them to

Inside:

■ The familiarity of home: Despite the sacrifices, the Sapps and Biels cannot bear the thought of institutional care for their disabled children / 6-7C



Welfare changes get closer

Differences with House bill next up for settlement

By Jonathan Riskind
Dispatch Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Overhaul of the federal government's 60-year-old welfare programs for the poor was assured yesterday when the Senate gave overwhelming support to a bill that would give states control of the system.

As the Senate gave 87-12 bipartisan approval yesterday to its welfare bill, several Republican House leaders stood in the chambers to show support and downplay differences between the two GOP-dominated bodies.

"It's a great achievement," House Speaker Newt Gingrich told Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole as the two GOP leaders walked from the Senate chambers.

Both the Senate and House bills parcel out most federal welfare money to the states in lump-sum block grants and allow them to operate programs largely as they wish, although the House would use block grants for more programs.

Both end welfare benefits as a guaranteed entitlement to about 14 million persons and place a five-

■ Medicaid may be headed for control by states / 6A

sion leaves it to states whether to prohibit cash assistance to mothers who have more children while on welfare, the House would mandate that prohibition.

The House bill would slow welfare spending by about \$102 billion over the next seven years, while the Senate would lower projected spending by \$70 billion. The Senate bill requires states to maintain a certain level of spending on welfare programs, while the House has no such requirement.

In a bipartisan compromise, the Senate added money for child care and a rainy-day reserve fund for states.

Those and other differences with the House bill caused 35 of 46 Democratic senators to vote for the Senate version, including Sen. John Glenn of Ohio. All but one Republican, Sen. Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina, supported the bill.

Some Democratic senators said the bill strips children of a guaranteed national safety net, an entitlement that has been guaranteed for

Please see **WELFARE** Page 2A

Welfare bill differences

These are key differences between the Senate and House welfare bills:

■ The Senate bill requires states to spend

district would have to pay the money back by the end of 1996.

The general fund budget of \$368.1 million is about \$11.6 million — or 3.3 percent — more than the district spent in the 1994-95 budget year.

The general fund is used for all basic operations of the district. About \$257 million is expected to go toward salaries and another \$59.7 million toward benefits.

About 55.5 percent of the general fund will be spent in the area of instruction, school officials said. About 11.7 percent will go toward support services for instruction, 11.5 percent toward building operations and 9.8 percent on administration.

The district plans to spend about \$13.9 million on supplies, up about \$1.8 million from the last budget year. About one-third of the increase will go to school supplies, school officials said.

About \$5.7 million will be spent on equipment, about a \$3.8 million increase from the last budget. Much of that increase will go toward computers and technology in the classroom, school officials said.

Despite a tight budget, the district is making a "modest" attempt to reverse a trend of shifting money from equipment and classroom supplies to pay salaries, budget director Robert Barrow said.

"That is an important thing for school districts to try to turn around," Barrow said. "Technology and computer purchases, you can't ignore those things for a long period of time and be successful."

However, the board did not budge from its decision earlier this year to reduce elementary school library assistant positions to part time — a move that school officials estimate will save the district about \$808,000 and were part of the \$12.7

Please see **LOAN** Page 2A

He wheeled Lauren into the conference room for a check-in meeting. His fiancée, [redacted], carried a small, vinyl suitcase filled with Lauren's clothes and possessions.

Strapped in her wheelchair for safety, Lauren fidgeted at the table's edge — occasionally yelling incoherently — as the adults discussed her future, sealing their agreement with the signing of legal and medical papers.

[redacted] knew that his daughter, who is mentally retarded and has cerebral palsy, probably would never understand that Heinzerling is now her home.

[redacted] gives Lauren a hug before leaving the Heinzerling Developmental Center.

Chris Heinzerling / Dispatch

A facility tour

A brisk breeze tempered a muggy 78 degrees — above average for May 17 — as a storm slipped across the city, leaving behind a half-inch of rain.

Inside, [redacted] and [redacted] found themselves in an equally unpredictable environment.

As they made their way to Lauren's room, they passed four disabled children lying prone on floor mats in one room, an alert boy incapable of movement who rested on

Please see **LAUREN** Page 2A

With a
heavy heart,
father says
goodbye
to daughter

son's income on receiving assistance. And both bills require most recipients to begin working within two years of receiving benefits.

Still, significant gaps remain between the Senate measure and the House bill that passed earlier this year, including the emotional issue of illegitimacy and assistance for welfare mothers. For instance, while the Senate ver-

states to decide.

■ The House bill prohibits additional cash payments to most welfare mothers who have more children or to mothers under age 18 who have children out of wedlock. The Senate bill allows states to decide.

■ The House bill would require states to accept lump-sum grants to run most welfare programs, including school meals and foster care. The Senate bill limits mandated grants to welfare, child care and job training programs.

■ The House allocates \$6 billion and the Senate \$8 billion in block grants for day care.

Dispatch graphic

TODAY'S TOP STORIES

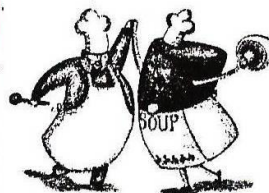
NATION & WORLD

One out of every seven prisoners is behind bars for committing a sex offense / **3A**

SPORTS

OSU football coach John Cooper is happy with his kickers, but he

Food 11c



■ Canned soup in gourmet fare? Local chefs created such recipes just for the Food section, which today can be found starting on

PAGE **11C** IN **METRO**

METRO

City officials say they are ready for the autumnal flood of leaves / **1C**

ACCENT

For the first time in decades, Cleveland Indians fans are still happy as the baseball season heads into the World Series / **1D**

Now!

Drew Delgross grew into his childhood dream: He's supervising trainer of the sea mammals at Sea World

of Ohio. Among his charges are the show's stars, Kayla and Winnie, two killer whales / **4D**

THE ARTS

In the Balkans conflict, President Clinton has repeated the mistakes his political idol, John F. Kennedy, made in Cuba, says military historian and author Donald Kagan / **10D**

Unstrung Heroes, which opens Friday, is Diane Keaton's first attempt at directing a feature film, but she isn't ending her work in front of the camera / **10D**

BUSINESS

Hoping to supplant the moon's phases, John Deere is showing farmers how to plant by satellites / **1E**

INDEX

Classified	Sec. C	People	2D
Comics	6,7D	Puzzles	6D
Editorials	8A	Stocks	3-5E
Horoscope	6D	Television	9D
Lottery	8E	Theaters	8D
Obituaries	7E	Vitals	8E

CD SAYS:

When was the last time you saw a chimp blowing his nose?



This newspaper is printed on recycled paper and is recyclable.



An armed man guards a beached cruiser on St. Thomas, an island devastated by Hurricane Marilyn over the weekend. Story on Page 7A.

Nasal spray someday may make common cold uncommon

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Sorry, the common cold still has no cure. But the next best thing is in the works: a simple nasal spray to protect people from catching the sniffles.

If this treatment works out — and it's still far from proven and years away from drugstore shelves — it will be a rare victory against an exceptionally wily enemy.

No medicine can make the ubiquitous head cold go away, not even chicken soup. And nothing can keep the runny nose, the aching sinuses, the sore throat and all the

rest from striking in the first place.

But that may be changing. In recent years, scientists have learned a lot about how the cold virus raises havoc. And this new understanding is beginning to pay off with strategies that may at last fend it off.

The latest approach is intended to protect vulnerable nasal passages from invasion by the rhinovirus. It seems to work — at least in chimpanzees.

Whether humans will fare so well remains to be seen. The precise dosage is a future matter, too, but scientists believe they

can develop a spray that will be squirted in the nose just once or twice a day to keep colds away through the worst season.

If the blocking agent pans out, it will be the first medicine that would block infection by a cold virus. It uses a variety of the virus that causes about half of all colds.

"The idea is to take advantage of how the rhinovirus enters the body," said Dr. Edward D. Huguene of Bayer Corp., who heads the team developing the drug. He outlined the work yesterday at an infectious disease meeting sponsored by the American

Society for Microbiology.

About 100 varieties of rhinovirus exist. Catching one of these makes people immune to that particular bug. But they are still susceptible to all other strains. That's why the average adult catches two or three colds a year.

The virus attacks through the nose. It latches onto a spot in the nasal lining that scientists call intracellular adhesion molecule-1, or ICAM-1. The new treatment is a modified version of ICAM-1 in soluble spray form. When put into the nose, this protein

swamps the virus with potential targets so it latches harmlessly onto the decoy rather than the lining of the nose.

So far, it has been tested only on chimps, which are the only animals other than humans that are infected by the rhinovirus. Fortunately for the chimps, though, they don't actually catch colds.

Huguene said his company is already making plans to try the spray on people. Just when these tests will start is not certain, and even if all goes well, the medicine is still years away from the drugstore.

A black-haired girl struggling to hold herself up in a wheelchair in the cafeteria.

The images are depressing, [redacted] thought, yet Heinzerling also seems remarkably cheery.

The children's rooms exude personality — from the Elvis and Bart Simpson posters on walls to Minnie Mouse stickers on bed frames.

The hallways are lined with orange carpet and large murals of zoo animals.

Nearly every child has a portable cassette player. Melodies of Raffi, Barney and Sesame Street waft to the children, who are unable to speak but share a communication with the music.

"The music works a magic on the children," a nurse said.

Outside Room 211, [redacted] paused.

"This is really hard for me," he said softly.

Nurses stood nearby with sympathetic faces, the anguish of check-in day never lost on them.

[redacted] lifted Lauren into her new bed, suspiciously comparing its construction with the bed he had made for his daughter at home in West Chester, Ohio.

He used pine. Heinzerling installed Plexiglas walls to box in the mattress, which was set low to the floor on a steel frame.

"Oh, no," [redacted] told a nurse. "This bed is not going to work."

[redacted] concern was safety.

"Lauren can put her arms over the side and pull herself up and over," he explained.

When he told the nurses that the bed's walls needed to be a few inches higher, a supervisor explained that Medicaid rules prohibit walls above 3 feet.

"What does Medicaid say when my daughter climbs out and cracks her head open?" [redacted] snapped.

A compromise was reached: Instead of raising the walls, the staff would lower the mattress.

Two maintenance workers — handyman surgeons of sorts — wheeled in large, blue carts full of tools and other instruments as they began a two-hour operation.

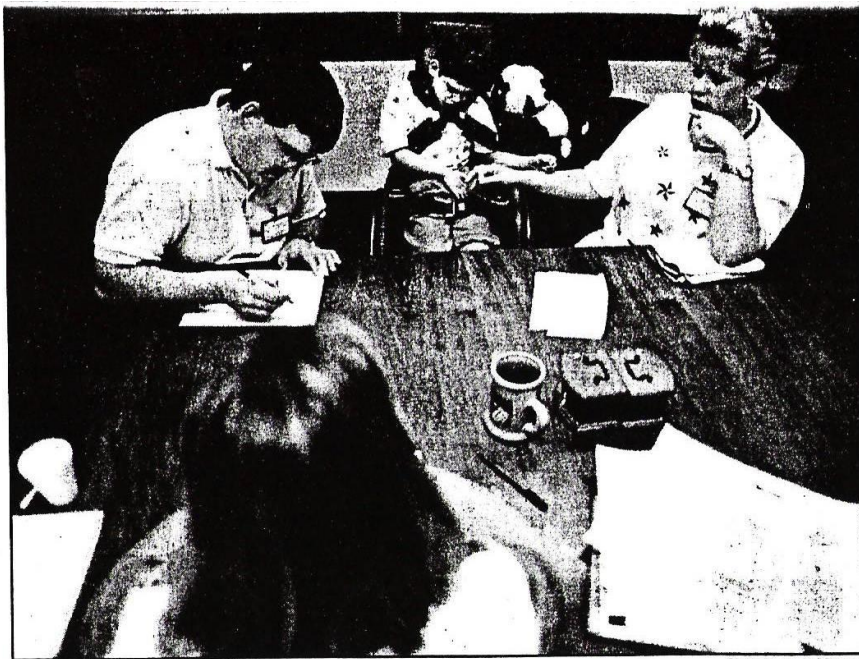
[redacted] stood in the hallway as the men circled the bed with tape measures and drills.

The irony of the situation didn't escape him: Except for the materials, the bed is identical to Lauren's bed in their apartment.

Last year, in a nursing report prepared for the state, [redacted] prepared for the state, [redacted] was criticized as an unsafe attempt to barricade Lauren.

"Look, this is the same bed,"

[redacted] said bitterly to his fiancée. "I'm accused of bad things. When the state does it, then it's OK."



Chris Russell / Dispatch

[redacted] signs papers relinquishing custody of his daughter as his fiancée, [redacted] holds Lauren's hand.

NOT THE PERFECT FIT

As [redacted] and [redacted] learned more about Heinzerling, the center's employees got to know Lauren.

Her mobility and strength, they discovered, easily surpass the most active of the young patients. Despite having little coordination, Lauren is a constant whirl of motion. She jumps, bends, twists and pinches. Her legs can support weight, but, for safety's sake, she must be held.

"This facility was not designed for an active child like Lauren," social worker Linda McGuire said.

Founded in 1959 by Otto and Mildred Heinzerling, the original 34-bed children's facility — called Peek O'Wee Ones — was built on the city's East Side.

Today, Heinzerling — nestled among a quiet oasis of trees and grassy fields on the city's South Side — has facilities for adults and children.

The \$4.5 million Heinzerling Developmental Center, built in 1982, houses 104 adults with severe mental retardation. Across the street, an equal number of similarly ill children live in the \$2.9 million Memorial Foundation, built in 1979.

Heinzerling has no playgrounds, despite the open areas on the grounds. The small courtyard

wasn't designed for play because few children can leave their wheelchairs.

My daughter does not belong here.

[redacted] could not rid himself of the thought, despite the friendly staff members who enthusiastically promised to change their routines so Lauren would get plenty of exercise.

The state had ruled that Lauren isn't sick enough to continue qualifying for Medicaid benefits under the Department of Human Services' Medically Fragile Waiver, which pays for home nursing care.

Now Lauren isn't sick enough to fit properly into Heinzerling.

[redacted] had crunched the numbers: Home care would cost the state about \$45,000 annually; institutional care would cost at least \$55,000 a year, according to conservative state estimates.

"It makes no sense," [redacted] said. "This is a system that destroys families."

THE UNAVOIDABLE FAREWELL

With Lauren, words were never necessary.

[redacted] squeezed his daughter in a giant hug, holding her at eye level while gently rubbing his forehead against hers.

I love you.

His eyes spoke silently. He slowly twirled and nuzzled Lauren's body, hoping that she might know he is her father — and always will be.

Nurses quietly walked away, recognizing that the inevitable moment had arrived, just as it does for every parent on the first day.

[redacted] stayed in the background, too, her eyes moistening as [redacted] and Lauren remained locked together.

"I feel so sorry for him right now," she said.

[redacted] carried Lauren to a recreation room, his eyes never leaving hers.

Goodbye.

His grip lingered as heart and mind clashed again, climaxing in a burst of pent-up tears as he handed Lauren to a waiting nurse. He dashed from the room back to where his fiancée was waiting. With his head locked forward, [redacted] strode

Places for children

Institutional care is an alternative to home care, although most facilities have waiting lists. Many nursing homes offer some beds to children. Here are some of the largest facilities in Ohio that treat disabled children:

FRANKLIN COUNTY

■ **Heinzerling Foundation Developmental Center**
Capacity: 104
Columbus

■ **Northland Terrace Medical Center for Subacute Care and Rehabilitation**
Capacity: 260
Columbus

OHIO

■ **Brookside**
Capacity: 104
Warren County
Mason

■ **St. Joseph's Children's Home**
Capacity: 47
Hamilton County
Cincinnati

■ **Camelot Lake**
Capacity: 36
Butler County
Fairfield

■ **Stillwater Center**
Capacity: 92
Montgomery County
Dayton

■ **Hattie Larham Foundation**
Capacity: 130
Portage County
Mantua

■ **Sunshine Children's Home**
Capacity: 84
Lucas County
Maumee

Sources: Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Dispatch graphic

out the doors of Heinzerling.

"If I look back," he said, "I'll never be able to leave."

A DIFFERENT LIFE

[redacted] and [redacted] married June 24. The small ceremony, held in a park gazebo near their home, was followed by a Florida honeymoon.

Because their daughter was at Heinzerling, the [redacted] brought a teddy bear to the wedding with a picture of Lauren taped to its furry, white belly.

Their dreams of marriage and quiet time together have become a bittersweet reality. They visit Lauren most weekends, making the 240-mile round-trip from West Chester in a day.

"This year has been a hell for me and [redacted]," [redacted] said. "I hope someone sees our lives and realizes this system must change."

The system, [redacted] said, forced a choice between the welfare of his daughter and that of his wife and their two boys, [redacted] and [redacted].

"You know, I wonder if anyone really cares," he said. "Parents like

us are really in the minority. It's easy just to ignore us."

Lauren is doing well at Heinzerling, where she celebrated her 8th birthday Sept. 12. She has been weaned off some medications and is working toward eating solid foods.

With major improvement, Lauren could be transferred to a residential facility, where patients require less medical supervision. A Medicaid waiver remains a distant option for the family because of the waiting list.

"I miss Lauren every day," [redacted] said. "I know she is fine, but not having her with me is very, very hard."

Lauren's absence doesn't go unnoticed by her stepbrother, either.

She and [redacted] had spent many hours gently wrestling, forming a bond based on touch and movement.

The first night Lauren spent at Heinzerling, [redacted] went into her old bedroom and climbed the walls of her special bed.

"I feel closer to her in the bed," he told his mother.

He plans to sleep there until Lauren comes home again.

Home is where

