

Michigan loses pioneer in HIV education

YPSILANTI, Mich. - At a time when the mere mention of AIDS was taboo, Cynthia Wrentmore of Ypsilanti hauled the disease out of the closet and to the forefront in Washtenaw County and Michigan's health care community. She never backed down and never stopped working to educate the public on HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, right up until her death Oct. 28 of cancer at age 66 at Arbor Hospice.

Wrentmore began her career in Ann Arbor as a public health nurse with Washtenaw County Department of Public Health in 1958. From 1981 until she retired Cynthia was the Communicable Disease Coordinator for Washtenaw County. During the mid-1980s she became a recognized speaker who was able to help families and caregivers put the AIDS epidemic in focus in their own lives, their community and their world. She was an early board member of Wellness Network of Huron Valley, which was an AIDS education and support agency, currently known as the HIV/AIDS Resource Center (HARC). HARC acknowledged Wrentmore with their first Community Service Award in 1992. Cynthia was a powerful speaker on HIV/AIDS locally and nationally.