Cheesehead Shalala

Is Donna putting politics before lives?

May 1, 1997 By Walter Armstrong and Ronnilyn Pustil

Activists in Washington, DC may have found a reason why Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala has so inexplicably refused to overturn the ban on federal funding of needle-exchange programs.

According to the local ACT-UP, “reliable sources within the Department of Health and Human Services” have disclosed that Shalala has blocked lifting the federal funding ban for fear it would thwart her planned 1998 run for governor of Wisconsin. “She afraid the incumbent Republican, Tommy Thompson, would accuse her of being soft on drugs,” says ACT UP/Washington’s Steve Michael.

Ted Osthelder, executive director of the Wisconsin Democratic State Party, confirms that Shalala’s name has surfaced as a gubernatorial candidate. The recent exit of another Democratic contender would mean instant frontrunner status for Shalala.

The Wisconsin State Journal reported that the annual Gridiron Club spoof that when asked if she planned to run for governor, Shalala “smiled widely,” then denied she had her eye on the office. If true, her decision to put politics ahead of public health is resulting in the continuing infections of thousands.

ACT UP/Washington has a long and accurate track record of leaking information from the White House.

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