This ALERT functions as a vehicle of communication between the Alliance and its constituency. It is our goal to provide timely and useful material in a readable, easy access format. Feel free to send in your announcements, share your ideas or ask for help.

IF YOU HAVE HAD TO DECIDE: Robin J.R. Blatt, R.N., M.P.H., Education Coordinator of the Massachusetts Genetics Program in the MA Department of Public Health, is in the process of developing a collection of personal experiences with prenatal genetic testing for a book to be published in 1993. She is interested in talking with both women and men about factors leading to the decision to choose or refuse prenatal tests and about experiences with the genetic counseling and prenatal testing process. All information is confidential. Contact the author at 292 Prince Street, West Newton, MA 02165.

A MEDIA MESS: A Los Angeles talk show host has shocked and angered many listeners by suggesting that a local news anchor is being irresponsible in taking a 50% risk of passing along a genetic abnormality to her baby. In a July broadcast, host Jane Norris asked: "Is it fair to pass along a genetically disfiguring disease?" Both Bree Walker-Lampley, a successful news anchor and media personality, and her first child have ectrodactyly, a malformation of the hands and feet that involves autosomal dominant inheritance. We have been asked to bring this issue to the attention of Alliance members. We encourage you to share your reactions with us so that we can share them with media representatives working with the disability community. All comments will be considered by Alliance leaders who are developing a position paper on this topic. If you want more information, call the office: 1/800/336-GENE; in Washington, DC: 202/331-0942; FAX: 202/293-0479.

CONSUMER COMPUTER SEARCHING: In Business Week (October 7), an article on page 152 describes data bases once accessible only to medical professionals and skilled computer users that can now be used by consumers. Check out your public library and health-resource libraries, clinics and hospitals to determine if they have installed the Health Reference Center, a hardware system by Information Access of Foster City, CA. It provides consumers free use of a pc to locate and print out disease-specific articles. Other companies will search for a fee. Check out: Medical Information Service operated by the nonprofit Palo Alto Medical Foundation: 1/800/999-1999; AIC Services in Ann Arbor, MI (313/996-5553; and American Connection of Stamford, CT (203/359-93590). Caution: These services vary with regard to price and timing and require specific requests.

GENETIC COUNSELING GLOSSARY: SPANISH TRANSLATIONS OF ENGLISH TERMS: a 26-page glossary is available to assist bilingual genetic counselors and medical personnel. Contact Gisela Rodriguez, Immigrant Outreach Program, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Dept. of Pediatrics, Division of Human Genetics, 185 South Orange Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103-2757.