

-The Education of A.I.D.S Discrimination

# Employees are being discriminated against for their infectious illness known as A.I.D.S. They are labeled incapable of performing the tasks they pursued before they were recognized as being infected. The confidentiality of an employee is a private matter and very personal. There are many different kinds of prejudice but not one as deadly as A.I.D.S Discrimination. The emotional trauma and future of employment play a giant role in the inflicted. Health Policies through job-related fields must learn to recognize that like other illnesses, A.I.D.S does not forbid an employee of performing his or her duties. It is the most altering form of discrimination because of the fact that every time a person finds out they are positive, the opinions of those who surround them are likely to change. The working class is the most susceptible to this form of discrimination. The every day environment of an employee with A.I.D.S is also the work grounds for someone who isn't infected with A.I.D.S. A.I.D.S Discrimination in a job-related atmosphere is due to lack of education and sensitivity. #

The infection of HIV does not reduce an employee's efficiency from satisfactory to intolerable. An employee should not be denied employment or promotion if they are not flawed by HIV. Some employees are not stripped of their capacities to perform even though they are infected with HIV (Lewy 2). Why should the employee health benefits be altered because of the nature of the disease. The majority of employee policies offered cover catastrophic illness with only ten percent covering A.I.D.S. One particular policy states that people do not become infected through usual behavior in a working environment. This illustrates that A.I.D.S patients are protected under disability law and are entitled to the same medical benefits (Karr A1). Policies must be issued to protect the inflicted. A Department of Health and Human Services review board has ruled "discrimination against someone who's HIV-positive is illegal" (Kolasa 63). Where does it say that unless the infected is under employment? The main thing to understand is that it doesn't. Eileen Kolasa reminds us of a law of direct meaning "HIV is a handicap protected under federal law" (66). The American justice system is what decides the fate of the infected. The challenge of bringing an A.I.D.S discrimination case in court has become very common in the United States. Such actions have been victorious and have helped pass revised Disability Acts which applies to all diseases (Annas 592). #

Even though the infected are defended under law, it still violates a person's human rights of personal health secrecy. This discrimination has not received attention as a form of human-rights violation. The government and court systems have helped essentially, but discrimination also affects medical care. Physicians and lawyers should promote the interests of the sick as well (Annas 592). Revealing this condition is a serious decision to make. The possibilities of acceptance will differ in the lives of many HIV-positive employees. Helen Lippman, senior editor of RN magazine replies: #

If legislation were passed requiring health-care providers to report their HIV status, nearly four in ten respondents say that they would report a suspected violation. (32) #

The tutelage of A.I.D.S at a job can considerably change attitudes of credibility. The Americans With Disability Act governs to any company with twenty-five or more employees. This legislation forbids discrimination against any disability or chronic disease. The interesting fine print is that it specifically mentions A.I.D.S. within its text (Pogash 77). The policies do not automatically make the routines of companies more likely to accept them. Wyatt John Bunker explains from Karrs article "the gold standard isn't whether companies

have a policy, but how they handle A.I.D.S. on a day to day basis" (A1). One of the first A.I.D.S. discrimination cases that was filed was against United Airlines. Two pilots were prohibited from flying due to the fact that they were HIV-positive. James F. Peltz and Stuart Silverstein, Los Angeles Times writers, explain that "the case extends the already-sensitive subject of A.I.D.S. in the workplace to another group of professionals whose jobs include protecting the safety of others" (D1). Bunker's theory does make sense in the employee situations where the general public becomes a dynamic participant in the matter. Robert Lewy shares his view of determining if an employee is able to perform his or her obligation of employment by a series of guidelines:

HIV-infected workers should be treated the same as persons with any other non-work-related injuries or illnesses, such as diabetes or epilepsy. They are entitled to equal rights and benefits of employment, including available medical services. (9)

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The commonly known department store "Macy's" came across an A.I.D.S. discrimination dispute. When Macy's had discovered that Mark Woodley, the usual Santa Claus, was HIV-positive he was denied employment. They did however offer him a job supervising the Santa Claus's, but he refused (Santa 22). Macy's tried to cover up by offering Mr. Woodley a job that did not involve the interaction of people. The situation was backed up by a protest march which resulted in chaos. One protestor John Winkleman states "A.I.D.S. discrimination violates the spirit of Christmas and we will not tolerate it at all" (Santa 22).

Some businesses do not want to deal with being responsible for someone who somewhere down the line might become fatally ill. Insurance coverage is a main concern for employees. The cost of treatment for A.I.D.S. from the first diagnosis to death is an amount of \$85,000 (Pogash 77). The Medical staff of hospitals deal with HIV-positive patients on a daily basis. Nurses, unlike office employees or construction workers, perform invasive procedures on patients providing them with immediate care. This line of duty may enforce stronger policies for their own legal protection (Kolasa 64). A survey was taken from Helen Lippman for RN magazine. She reports "a caregiver's risk of infection after a needlestick with contaminated blood, the CDC estimates is about one in 200, and about one in 300 from percutaneous exposure" (30). Medical officials should be offered these protection plans, but should also become more sensitive to the subject of discrimination. The City of Philadelphia fired emergency health physicians for refusing to give proper treatment to patients with A.I.D.S. (Philadelphia 17). If you are put in a situation where you are working with someone who is infected or worrying of becoming infected yourself, you would want to know what protection is offered after knowing the rights of the caregiver (Kolasa 63).

# A.I.D.S. discrimination is no different than any other form of prejudice. The only way it trails off the basic path is that it can go either way. Whether you are a patient who is infected or a nurse who is infected. Whether you are an office employee or a client of an office employee. A.I.D.S. does not chose skin color, religion, or ethnic background. # It will get to anyone puts themselves at risk. If you add up all the hate and discomfort between people or groups of people in our society who are prejudiced as it is, and add another reason to take the hate to a higher level, the problem will never be solved. Everyone must work together and become more educated about the way victims of this hourglass disease are treated. Black, White, Jewish, Asian, etc. Everyone has their opposing differences about one another, or how one race or belief is dominant over another.

A.I.D.S. is not prejudice. It has a hold on many groups of these people.

Health policies are offered for the protection of the sick, but no policy will protect them from the emotional abuse. This is why we shouldn't turn our backs on these people who are less fortunate. It's not going to get better. We must educate ourselves to not be so close-minded, and start to get ahead of the game. Despite all the irreconcilable differences between different types of people who are infected, they have one threatening thing in common.....they are all dying. Educate not to discriminate. Are you so certain you will never be infected?# #-----

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