

AIDS POLICY STATEMENT (Answer Book #IV-25, January 22, 1990)

It is the policy of West Virginia University at Parkersburg to provide equal opportunities in employment and education to employees and students on the basis of individual qualifications and merit without regard to race, sex, religion, age, national origin or handicap.

WVU at Parkersburg will focus concern and action in providing equal opportunities to all qualified persons with disabilities who are academically or occupationally productive and contribute to the goals of the college. WVU at Parkersburg will accommodate the restrictions of those infected with the AIDS virus where reasonable.

Persons with Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and those with other ramifications of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection will be considered as having handicapping conditions.

AIDS is an acquired condition of impaired immune function and is caused by a virus called the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV infects white blood cells, T-lymphocytes, that are important for normal immune function.

Decisions regarding individuals with AIDS or related conditions shall be determined by evaluating each case individually in keeping with the general policy and the latest medical information available.

The decision making body for these issues will be a committee whose membership will include the President, Dean of Students, Dean of Academic Affairs, Consulting Physician, Coordinator of Student Health Services, and, if the person with AIDS chooses, one person from his/her faculty, staff or student group. Faculty Assembly, Staff Assembly and Student Government will each provide the names of four members of that group. The person with AIDS selects one person from the appropriate list.

COVERAGE

These guidelines apply to all current and prospective students and employees with HIV infection. They are based on current medical knowledge which indicates that students or employees with any form of HIV infection do not pose a health risk to other students or employees in an academic setting.

Decisions about quarantine will be made by Public Health Officials.

Students who work in other agencies as a result of their course work must follow the policies of that institution. Such situations might include cooperative education and field placement.

COLLEGE COMMITTEE

There will be a standing committee on AIDS whose membership shall represent a cross section of the College community. This committee will review policies and oversee educational programs regarding AIDS for the employees and students. Such education will include information about transmission of the disease and precautions that may be taken to prevent its spread.

PROCEDURES

Admissions and Employment

WVU at Parkersburg will not include consideration of the existence of any form of HIV infection in the initial employment or admissions decision for people applying for employment or admission to the College.

Attendance

Employees and students who have HIV infection, whether they are symptomatic or not, are not restricted in employment and classroom attendance as long as they are physically and mentally able to attend class or to perform their responsibilities as defined in their position descriptions.

Access to Facilities

Students and employees with HIV infection will have the same access as any other student and employee to classrooms, physical fitness facilities, theaters, cafeterias, recreational facilities and other common areas.

Teaching Laboratories

WVU at Parkersburg shall adopt safety guidelines for the handling of blood and body fluids of all persons in teaching laboratories. Laboratory courses requiring exposure to blood, such as biology courses in which blood is obtained by finger prick for typing and examination, should require use of disposable equipment. Lancets or other blood-letting devices should not be reused or shared. Students, except those in health care professions, should not be required to obtain or process the blood of others.

Medical Care/Medical History

WVU at Parkersburg will not routinely ask students or employees to respond to questions about the existence of HIV infection. Students and employees with the HIV infection are encouraged to inform the Coordinator of Student Health Services, the Coordinator of the Employee Assistance Program or a Counselor in order to enable the college to provide health care, counseling or make referrals to appropriate care providers. This information, as with any other medical and counseling information, will be handled in a strictly confidential manner.

Immunizations

Persons known to have immune deficiencies will be excused from college requirements for certain vaccinations, especially measles and rubella, as these vaccinations may lead to serious consequences in people with an unsatisfactory immune system.

Safety Precautions

WVU at Parkersburg will adopt safety guidelines as proposed by the U.S. Public Health Service for the handling of blood and body fluids of all persons, not just those known to have HIV infection.

Disinfection

Surfaces contaminated by blood or other body fluids can be successfully cleaned and disinfected with commercial disinfectant solutions or with household bleach, freshly diluted in a one to ten solution.

This procedure also destroys the Hepatitis B virus.

Confidentiality of Information

Standards

WVU at Parkersburg adopts the following guidelines concerning the handling of confidential information about people with HIV infection as outlined in the American College Health Association's Recommended Standards and Practices for a College health Program, fourth edition:

“In general, it is recommended that no specific or detailed information concerning complaints or diagnosis be provided to faculty, administrators, or even parents, without the expressed written consent of the patient in each case. This position with respect to health records is supported by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.”

Release of Information

No person, agency, insurer, employer or institution shall be provided any medical information of any kind without the prior written consent of the patient. The inclusion of any information regarding HIV infection in the medical records should be discussed with the patient prior to its entry.

Legal Liability

WVU at Parkersburg is aware that all confidential medical information is protected by statutes and that any unauthorized disclosure of it may create legal liability. The confidentiality of information is superseded by the necessity to protect others only in very specific, life-threatening circumstances.

“Need to Know”

The number of people in the college who are aware of the existence and/or identity of students or employees who have HIV infection should be kept to an absolute minimum, both to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the infected persons and to avoid the generation of unnecessary fear and anxiety among other students and employees.