



HIV and AIDS in the workplace

Marion Maguire

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Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject Business economics - Personnel and Organisation, grade: 1.0 (A), Hawai'i Pacific University (-), course: Lecture MBA Program, 12 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: In the business environment HIV and AIDS has become both a health and an economic problem. As the epidemic spreads throughout the workforce, Human resources personnel and managers in general must be prepared to deal effectively with the challenge of having employees who are affected by HIV and AIDS. The majority of large U.S. corporations already employ a substantial number of people who have AIDS or are infected with HIV. Integration of HIV and AIDS programs into human resources management systems should be viewed as a means to achieve overall effective human resource management and to reduce costs. Currently, only 16% of U.S. businesses offer AIDS/HIV workplace education programs to their employees. In order to deal with this issue effectively, managers need to know how HIV is transmitted, the stages of the disease, how to prevent discrimination against employees who have AIDS or are infected with HIV, and what accommodations must be provided for such workers under the ADA and other laws. They also need to learn how to manage the psychological climate of work groups that have employees with HIV or AIDS to prevent workplace disruptions.

Statement of the problem

HIV and AIDS have become a serious problem in all five continents. HIV continues to spread around the world and global statistics show that 34.3 million people are living with HIV in 2003, in comparison to 5.4 million in 1999. The virus impacts not only the internal system of an individual's body, but also does the infection rate affects business and the workplace. Health records show that on average HIV-infected employees have taken seventeen full days of sick leave. The cost of absenteeism, provision of hospital and medical care, training and wages for new employee's replacements is enormous. But HIV at the workplace also leads to an ethical dilemma. There are different moral viewpoints and different interests that may conflict with those of another. But not just interests might be different, also the rights of employers and employees may conflict. An employer has the right to expect productivity and employees are entitled to a safe working environment but also to not being discriminated. Therefore making ethical decisions in the workplace is not a simple matter.

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