

STUDENT AFFAIRS OP 91.302: AIDS Policy

Date: January 8, 1996

Purpose

To provide guidelines to ensure that individuals identified as having a positive antibody to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (AIDS) will be protected from discrimination at Mississippi State University, to protect the university community from unnecessary risks, and to protect the confidentiality of medical information within the guidelines established by state and federal law.

Policy

Mississippi State University subscribes to the guidelines of the American College Health Association in its report, Aids on the College Campus (2) (Appendix A), CDC guidelines (3,4), February 1989, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's standard on bloodborne pathogens (10). Furthermore, Mississippi State University subscribes to the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and does not discriminate against any employee, student, or applicant who may be infected with HIV. As further medical and legal information becomes available, this policy may be modified.

For purposes of this policy, the term HIV/AIDS will be used throughout to refer to HIV-related illnesses, including a positive antibody test for HIV.

Procedure

All current information indicates that HIV/AIDS is not easily transmitted. There is no evidence of a health risk to others from casual contact with HIV-related illnesses. According to the Public Health Service, no risk is created by living in the same residence as someone infected with HIV/AIDS; eating food handled by someone infected with HIV/AIDS; or swimming in a pool with someone infected with HIV/AIDS. The following guidelines and procedures are predicated on this understanding.

The response to the occurrence of a case of HIV/AIDS in the university community will be based on both the guidelines and the particular circumstances. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and confidentiality as well as to provide for the health of both the individual infected and other members of the university community.

1. Students, faculty, and staff will not be required to undergo screening for HIV/AIDS, except for voluntary blood procurement.
2. Neither the existence of HIV/AIDS nor a positive antibody test for HIV/AIDS will be a sole factor in admission or employment decisions.
3. Students, faculty, and staff who have HIV/AIDS will not be denied access to classroom attendance, employment, or campus facilities, except in rare instances, on the basis of their having HIV/AIDS so long as their physical or mental condition permits.
4. Students who are aware that they have HIV/AIDS are encouraged to report their condition to the Director of the Longest Student Health Center. Faculty and staff who are aware that they have HIV/AIDS are encouraged to report their condition to their personal physician. This will permit proper monitoring of their condition and referral for treatment and supportive services. Furthermore, it will ensure that the affected individuals do not receive immunizations, required or elective, which could have serious consequences for those with poorly functioning immune systems. Thus, individuals with HIV/AIDS may be excused from institutional requirements for certain immunizations.
5. The Director of the Longest Student Health Center will hold in the strictest medical confidence any personally identifiable information about the existence of HIV/AIDS, except for disclosures required by

law. No information will be furnished to faculty, administrators, or parents without the express written consent of the individual.

6. Students who desire to live in university housing and who have HIV/AIDS have certain responsibilities to themselves and to others. The student is encouraged to report the condition to the Director of the Longest Student Health Center so that they can be properly monitored and provided with information about the condition and medically accepted ways to prevent transmission to others. University housing will not allow concern or suspicion about the health or sexuality of a student on the part of other students, or by housing employees, to result in a demand that the suspected student be tested for HIV/AIDS, or that he/she be relocated, isolated, ostracized, or excluded from university housing. There may, however, be in some circumstances reasonable concern for the health of students with HIV/AIDS when those students might be exposed to certain contagious diseases in a close living situation. Students may be assigned private rooms in the interest of protecting their health. Behavior which threatens the health of others may provide grounds for an involuntary withdrawal from university housing or from the university itself.
7. Students who have HIV/AIDS will be offered the opportunity for counseling on a voluntary basis.
8. Appropriate units of the university will provide an ongoing AIDS Education Program for all members of the university community. The intent of the program will be to provide current information and to assist those with HIV/AIDS in seeking appropriate medical attention. The AIDS Education Program will also emphasize the following:
 - a. Even though individuals may not have symptoms, persons with HIV/AIDS may transmit the virus to others through intimate, unprotected sexual contact or exposure to blood.
 - b. Among people who choose to be sexually active, the consistent and conscientious use of condoms and spermicides containing nonoxynol-9 greatly reduces the chance of transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus. Abstinence is the only certain preventative behavior.
 - c. The sharing of needles used in the injection of illicit drugs is an efficient way to transmit HIV/AIDS. It is also possible that needles used to inject steroids may transmit HIV/AIDS as well.
 - d. Persons with documented HIV/AIDS, and those with behavior risk factors for HIV/AIDS, should not donate blood, plasma, sperm, organs, or tissues.
 - e. People with HIV/AIDS pose no risk of transmitting the virus to others through ordinary, casual interpersonal contact.
 - f. It is possible that certain interventions and therapies may help limit the consequences of HIV/AIDS among people already infected. People who know they have been infected may thus benefit from regular medical follow-up and immunologic evaluation.

Review

The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for the review of this operating policy every four years or as needed.

**DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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