

**Subject:** AIDS AND OTHER LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES

**Date:** July 10, 1993

**Pages:** 1 of 1

**Replaces Policy Dated:** N/A

**PURPOSE:** To establish policy with regard to Pinal County employees and clients who are afflicted with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), AIDS-related complex (ARC), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV-Infection), or other life-threatening illnesses, and to assure that such employees and clients are treated with compassion and understanding and accorded assistance and support.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY:** The most valuable asset of the Pinal County government is its employees; all departments and offices should make every effort to use the talents of all employees to the maximum extent. To that end, individuals with AIDS or other life-threatening illnesses should be treated with the same compassion and consideration given to any employee with a health problem.

**SCOPE:**

**Continuation of Work:** An employee with AIDS or other life-threatening illnesses should be permitted to continue to work at his or her regular position as long as acceptable performance standards are met. The employee's supervisor should implement any reasonable accommodation, which will assist the employee in meeting these standards despite the illness. Supervisors should be informed when an employee has AIDS or other life-threatening illness only on a need to know basis and with the explicit written consent of the employee. Supervisors should exercise every possible consideration to protect the identity and medical condition of any employee infected with the AIDS virus or any other infectious disease that cannot be transmitted through casual contact. Disclosure of such confidential information may subject the supervisor to criminal and civil action.

**Working with Employees and Clients with AIDS:** The preponderance of available medical and scientific information indicates that HIV is NOT casually transmitted in social or most occupational environments in which County employees work. Therefore, employees have no basis upon which to refuse to work or withhold their services for fear of contracting HIV infection. An employee who refuses to provide services to or work with any employee, or who harasses or otherwise discriminates against an employee or client with AIDS, may be subject to disciplinary action. Disclosure of confidential health-related information may subject employees to criminal and civil action.

**Continuation of Benefits:** Eligible employees with AIDS or other life-threatening illnesses shall receive the same employment benefits, such as group health and life insurance and use of leave, as those with other illnesses.

**Testing:** HIV antibody testing will not be used as a method of screening potential employees or for persons already employed. Any employee who desires to determine whether he or she has been infected with HIV may request testing by his or her own private physician or by contacting the Pinal County Health Department for free HIV counseling and testing services.

**Education:** At present, employees may receive current reliable information regarding communicable diseases (e.g., how they are transmitted, risk of infection, precautionary measures, hazards and seriousness of the disease, etc.) from the Pinal County Health Department. The County Health Department also serves as a resource for information on communicable diseases and as a referral resource for persons with AIDS, ARC, or HIV infection seeking psycho social, legal, financial, or medical assistance.