



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NEWS RELEASE

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DOH ISSUES NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR HIV REPORTING

HONOLULU -- The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) has issued new reporting requirements for healthcare providers and laboratories to include the patient's name for all cases of HIV infection. This includes individuals who were diagnosed previously in Hawai'i or elsewhere and those who are newly diagnosed. All reported information is protected and used for public health purposes.

Health care providers and laboratories in Hawai'i are required by law to provide information to the DOH on reportable diseases for public health purposes. The new requirements for named HIV reporting are part of recent changes to the Hawai'i State Administrative Rules, Chapter 156, Communicable Disease Reporting.

Since 2003, Hawai'i's HIV healthcare providers and laboratories have reported HIV cases to the DOH using a code system known as the Unnamed Test Code (UTC). As of March 13, 2008 all providers are required to report HIV infection using the patient's name. The UTC system will no longer be used. HIV physicians and healthcare facilities are also required to provide demographic, risk and other information using the state's HIV/AIDS report form.

"The Department of Health considers protection of reported data to be paramount," said Health Director Dr. Chiyome Fukino. "All named HIV reports, like AIDS reports, will be maintained at the highest levels of confidentiality and security, consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for protecting personal HIV information."

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The DOH has strict procedures to prevent access to data. Data are kept in a secured location under lock and key. Individual names are not sent to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or anywhere else and individual level information is not released. The data is used cumulatively without identifying information.

“The move to named HIV reporting has involved thoughtful and frank discussions involving the HIV community, the Community Planning Group and the Department of Health. We welcome this change based on community consensus,” said Peter Whiticar, Chief of the STD/AIDS Prevention Branch.

The federal Ryan White CARE Act stipulates that all states use names for HIV reporting in order to receive federal HIV/AIDS care funding that is awarded on a formula basis. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that only named HIV reporting gives the necessary degree of accuracy for the purposes of epidemiology, and to allocate funds by formula across jurisdictions.

Since 1983, AIDS cases have been reported by name in Hawai'i and the data has provided useful information in determining the resources needed for prevention and care services. However, with the introduction of highly effective HIV medications many infected individuals now live for many years without developing an AIDS defining diagnosis. With the newly implemented named HIV reporting, the DOH and the community will get a clearer understanding of HIV infection in Hawai'i and better determine resource needs.

The DOH and partner agencies across the state will continue to offer the option of anonymous HIV testing. The DOH encourages all individuals who may be at risk to be tested for HIV in private or public health care settings and know their HIV status. HIV reporting by name of those testing positive will give the most complete and accurate understanding of the challenges and successes of dealing with HIV in Hawai'i.

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