

ORIGINAL

BUSINESS BRIEFING - AIDS IN THE WORKPLACE

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PRESENTED TO AMFAR MEETING OF
CHAIRMEN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICERS OF MAJOR U.S. CORPORATIONS

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I WOULD LIKE TO THANK DR. MATHILDE KRIM AND DR. MERVYN SILVERMAN OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR AIDS RESEARCH FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS COUNTRY'S MAJOR CORPORATIONS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES SURROUNDING AIDS AND THE WORKPLACE.

DR. KRIM WILL BRIEF YOU ON THE MAJOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL, FINANCIAL, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE DELIVERY IMPLICATIONS OF AIDS. WHAT I WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT ARE SOME SPECIFICS CONCERNING THE WAY IN WHICH YOU AND I WORKING TOGETHER CAN PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LEADERSHIP TO STEM THE TIDE OF AIDS.

SINCE I FIRST BEGAN TO WORK ON AIDS OVER 20 MONTHS AGO I HAVE FELT THE NEED FOR INVOLVING THE BUSINESS SECTOR. IN DRAFTING THE SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT ON AIDS I CONSULTED WITH THE WASHINGTON BUSINESS GROUP ON HEALTH AS THE HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THEY BROUGHT IN REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DAYTON-HUDSON DEPARTMENT STORE CHAIN WHO EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR A COMPANY TO BEGIN THE EMPLOYEE EDUCATION PROCESS BEFORE IT HAS ITS FIRST CASE OF AIDS OR HIV POSITIVITY. ALSO EMPHASIZED WAS THE NEED FOR BUSINESSES TO TREAT AIDS EXACTLY AS THEY WOULD ANY OTHER CHRONIC DISEASE.

I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION THE FOLLOWING COMPANY POLICIES:

- o AIDS SHOULD BE TREATED CONSISTENTLY WITH EXISTING MEDICAL, BENEFITS, OR EMPLOYEE POLICIES COVERING SICKNESS OR OTHER DISABILITIES.

- o EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE OFFERED THE RIGHT TO CONTINUE WORKING AS LONG AS THEY ARE ABLE TO PERFORM THEIR JOBS SATISFACTORILY AND AS LONG AS THE BEST AVAILABLE MEDICAL EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT DOES NOT PRESENT A HEALTH OR SAFETY THREAT TO THEMSELVES, OTHER EMPLOYEES, OR CUSTOMERS.

- o REASONABLE EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE SERIOUSLY ILL PATIENTS BY PROVIDING, WHERE POSSIBLE, FLEXIBLE WORK AREAS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND HOURS. SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE WILL BE EXPECTED AS CONDITION FOR CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT.

- o EMPLOYEES WILL BE ASKED TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF CRITICALLY ILL COLLEAGUES.

- o EMPLOYEES WILL NOT BE GRANTED TRANSFER RIGHTS OUTSIDE OF EXISTING TRANSFER POLICIES TO AVOID WORKING WITH PERSONS WITH AIDS OR THOSE WHO ARE HIV POSITIVE.

- o CONFIDENTIALITY OF EMPLOYEES' MEDICAL RECORDS, CONSISTENT WITH ACCEPTED LEGAL, MEDICAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, WILL BE MAINTAINED.

- o IN ALL CASES RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL, CONSISTENT WITH COMPANIES' EXISTING PRACTICES, WILL BE STRESSED BY MANAGEMENT, COLLEAGUES, AND SUBORDINATES.

- o AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BASED ON THE BEST CURRENTLY AVAILABLE MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO HELP EMPLOYEES UNDERSTAND WHAT AIDS IS AND IS NOT, AND WHAT POLICIES THE COMPANY HAS IN PLACE TO COVER EMPLOYEES WITH ALL DISABILITIES, INCLUDING AIDS.

EMPLOYEES NEED TO UNDERSTAND THERE IS NO RISK OF CONTRACTING OR TRANSMITTING AIDS THROUGH CASUAL CONTACT. THEY NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY CAN WORK SIDE BY SIDE WITH A PERSON WHO HAS AIDS AND NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT CATCHING THE VIRUS FROM THAT PERSON. THEY NEED TO REALIZE THAT AIDS IS A RATHER PECULIAR DISEASE IN THAT IT TRAVELS AROUND MAINLY IN A PERSON'S BLOODSTREAM OR IN SEMEN. IT DOESN'T HANG AROUND ON WATER FOUNTAINS OR DOOR-KNOBS. IT CAN'T BE FOUND ON SWEAT TOWELS OR BROOM HANDLES OR ANYTHING ELSE.

ABOVE ALL, EMPLOYEES NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE'RE FIGHTING A DISEASE...NOT PEOPLE. WE'RE FIGHTING A VIRUS THAT HAS NOVEL BIOPHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND REQUIREMENTS...WE ARE NOT AT WAR WITH A LIFESTYLE. SOME MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC GENUINELY MISTAKE A GIVEN LIFESTYLE AS BEING -- ITSELF -- THE CAUSE OF AIDS. BUT THERE'S NOT A SHRED OF SCIENTIFIC TRUTH TO THAT.

HOMOSEXUALS, BISEXUAL MEN, AND INTRAVENOUS DRUG ABUSERS DO COMPRISE THE VAST MAJORITY OF AIDS VICTIMS SO FAR...ABOUT 9 OUT OF 10. BUT, AS YOU MAY KNOW BY NOW, THIS IS NO LONGER AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB.

ABOUT 4 PERCENT OF ALL REPORTED AIDS VICTIMS ARE HETEROSEXUALS...MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE NEITHER HOMOSEXUAL NOR I.V. DRUG ABUSERS. APPARENTLY THEIR ONLY HIGH-RISK ACTIVITY WAS TO HAVE HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH SOMEONE ELSE HAD AIDS. IT'S THE SAME STORY WE IN PUBLIC HEALTH HAVE BEEN TELLING FOR YEARS IN REGARD TO THE TRANSMISSION OF HERPES, SYPHILIS, GONORRHEA, CHLAMYDIA, AND OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES. BUT AIDS HAS PUT A NEW TWIST ON THAT OLD STORY. THE AIDS INFECTION DOESN'T END WITH A SHOT OF AN ANTIBIOTIC. IT ENDS IN DEATH.

TO PREVENT THESE AIDS DEATHS WE NEED YOU AS ENLIGHTENED MANAGERS TO TAKE ACTION. WE NEED YOU TO SET THE EXAMPLE FOR BEING FAIR AND OBJECTIVE AND NOT SUCCUMBING TO GROUNDLESS HYSTERIA. WE NEED YOU TO BE INFORMED ABOUT AIDS TO INFORM YOUR EMPLOYEES ABOUT AIDS, AND TO ENCOURAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES TO EXERCISE APPROPRIATE PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

IF YOU FAIL,--IF YOU DO NOT GET THE AIDS PREVENTION MESSAGE ACROSS--YOUR FAILURE WILL BE MEASURED IN THE LOSS OF PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF YOUR WORKFORCE AND IN HIGHER HEALTH CARE COSTS. I AM CONCERNED THAT WITHOUT PROPER PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT AIDS WILL "BREAK THE BANK".

- o THE TYPICAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE PLAN IS HOSPITAL BASED. HEALTH CARE COSTS CAN BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED BY ENCOURAGEING ALTERNATIVES TO HOSPITAL CARE. RECENT STUDIES SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT NATIONALLY THE COST OF TREATING ONE AIDS PATIENT IS IN THE \$50,000 TO \$75,000 RANGE. THE AVERAGE COST IN SAN FRANCISCO IS \$25,000 TO \$32,000. A MAJOR REASON FOR THIS DIFFERENCE IS INDIVIDUAL CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AMONG WEST COAST HEALTH CARE PURCHASERS.

- o IN SAN FRANCISCO THE TYPICAL HOSPITAL STAY FOR AN AIDS PATIENT IS 11.4 DAYS VERSUS 31 - 50 DAYS IN OTHER CITIES.
- o THE DIFFERENCE IS EMPLOYER, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO INSURE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF CARE THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE ILLNESS.
- o CASE MANAGEMENT IS DESIGNED TO CUSTOMIZE CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH CATASTROPHIC ILLNESSES. THE PROCESS REQUIRES COST ANALYSIS AND COORDINATION BY AN INDIVIDUAL CASE MANAGER, OFTEN A NURSE. THE CASE MANAGER COMPARES THE COST AND QUALITY OF CARE PROVIDED AT DIFFERENT HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS AND TAYLORS THEM TO THE PATIENT'S NEED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PATIENT, FAMILY, AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS. THE RESULT IS A HEALTH CARE PLAN PRESENTED TO THE PURCHASER FOR APPROVAL.

IN 1980 THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ISSUED A REPORT ENTITLED OBJECTIVES FOR THE NATION WHICH SPECIFIED MEASURABLE HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION OBJECTIVES FOR ACHIEVEMENT BY 1990.

AMERICAN INDUSTRY RESPONDED TO THESE OBJECTIVES BY DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS THAT HELPED THOUSANDS OF EMPLOYEES SUCCESSFULLY CHANGE DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS RELATED TO SMOKING, WEIGHT CONTROL, PHYSICAL FITNESS AND OTHER LIFESTYLE FACTORS.

I CHALLENGE YOU TODAY TO USE WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM THESE PROGRAMS TO DEVELOP EQUALLY SUCCESSFUL BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION STRATEGIES TO CONTAIN THE FURTHER SPREAD OF AIDS.

I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT MANY COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO DO THIS. FOR EXAMPLE, PACIFIC MUTUAL COORDINATED AND STAFFED THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MANUAL ON "FACILITATING AIDS EDUCATION IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT". OTHER LEADERS IN WORKPLACE AIDS EDUCATION HAVE BEEN PACIFIC BELL, LEVI-STRAUSS AND BANK OF AMERICAN, AND THAT LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE BY ANY MEANS.

WE'VE GOT A MAJOR TASK AHEAD OF US...AND WE'VE GOT TO DO IT TOGETHER...OR IT WON'T GET DONE AT ALL. GOVERNMENT CANNOT DO THE JOB ALONE. WE NEED THE FULL COLLABORATION AND COMMITMENT OF AMERICAN BUSINESS AS WELL. NONE OF US CAN DEFAULT ON THIS RESPONSIBILITY. TOO MANY INNOCENT LIVES DEPEND ON US. WE'RE TALKING NOT ONLY ABOUT THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF AMERICA'S 100 MILLION WORKING PEOPLE...WE'RE ALSO TALKING ABOUT THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

YOU MAY FEEL AWKWARD DEALING WITH THE TABOO SUBJECT OF AIDS AND WITH EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE THE DISEASE.

EMPLOYERS HOWEVER ARE LEGALLY AND ETHICALLY BOUND TO TREAT EMPLOYEES WITH AIDS THE SAME WAY THEY TREAT OTHERS WITH CATASTROPHIC AND DISABLING CONDITIONS.

AS NOTED, SOME COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY DEMONSTRATED COURAGE AND COMPASSION IN THEIR AIDS EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH POLICIES. BY FOLLOWING THEIR LEAD YOU WILL HELP ELIMINATE THE FEAR AND DISCRIMINATION THAT SURROUNDS PERSONS WITH AIDS. BY BECOMING NATIONAL LEADERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AIDS YOU CAN HELP ME AS SURGEON GENERAL SET THE TONE FOR THE NATION'S BUSINESS IN DEALING WITH A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THEIR MOST IMPORTANT NATURAL RESOURCE -- THEIR EMPLOYEES.

THANK YOU.