

HIV/AIDS IN THE BRAZILIAN WORKPLACE:

A Stigma Reduction Guide for Employers

AIDS Responsibility Project | Stigma Reduction Program

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HIV/AIDS

IN THE BRAZILIAN

WORKPLACE:

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Employers

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Foreword



The United States of America has made the global fight against HIV/AIDS a major foreign policy priority. Americans continue to show leadership on this crucial issue wherever they live and work around the world. President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, focusing on 14 of the most affected countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, is a prime example of U.S. commitment and leadership on this issue.

Business has an important role to play in addressing HIV/AIDS as well. In part, this is because businesses, particularly those with operations in the hardest-hit countries, recognize the profound impact of the epidemic on their workforce. But, just as importantly, many firms - including those in countries where HIV/AIDS has not yet strongly taken hold - recognize the challenge posed by HIV/AIDS and have moved to the fore as global citizens and leaders by developing HIV/AIDS workplace policies and programs and addressing the stigma of HIV/AIDS in their corporate cultures.

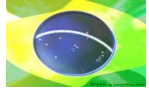
The ARP Stigma Reduction Program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, and endorsed by the American Chamber of Commerce of São Paulo, is an important part of these efforts. As part of this program, ARP developed this practical guide on stigma reduction for employers.

As one part of a broad partnership between the U.S. and Brazil in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic, those in the business community to take a leadership role in making vital contributions are to be commended and encouraged to continue developing new and innovative responses to the threat that HIV/AIDS poses to the global community.

ABNER MASON

Executive Director

AIDS Responsibility Project



Introduction

As globalization continues to bring the economies of the world closer together, new threats to growth and development continue to emerge. These threats move quickly across borders and challenge every nation regardless of culture, language or tradition.

One of the most serious threats in today's world is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Not only is HIV/AIDS a grave public health threat, having killed over 20 million people worldwide, but it is a growing economic threat that industries and corporations are increasingly recognizing and confronting.

One of the greatest impediments to developing effective strategies to combat the epidemic is HIV-related stigma, and the discrimination that results. Stigma and discrimination prevail in communities, within families, in the media, among health care providers, and in the workplace. It is a concrete wall that stands in the way of effectively fighting the spread of HIV and its impact. Stigma causes fear and secrecy, and is a significant barrier to prevention and treatment efforts.

People avoid testing for fear of their results being disclosed. Ignorance of one's HIV status may lead to high-risk behavior that would otherwise be avoided, and helps the virus spread more easily. Fear of discussing HIV/AIDS in a stigmatized environment inhibits public education efforts, allowing ignorance to trump prevention. People living with HIV/ AIDS are less likely to seek out effective medical treatment for fear of the consequences of disclosing their status to a Human Resources department or benefits provider.

Prevention and care strategies cannot succeed as long as stigma impedes broad-scale HIV testing, education and access to treatment. Reducing stigma, therefore, is a vital element in any strategy to confront the HIV/AIDS threat, and for emerging economies in today's world, it is an absolute economic necessity.

Initiatives for reducing stigma and discrimination in the workplace are critical for the wellbeing of employees, companies, and society. They create an environment of trust and loyalty, improve employee health and productivity, enhance the image of the corporation, and ultimately, contribute to national efforts to effectively prevent and treat HIV/AIDS. And in an emerging economy such as Brazil, where talent, skills, and productivity will be critical to being competitive, reducing stigma is an essential element of corporate and economic success.



AIDS Responsibility Project (ARP) launched the Stigma Reduction Program as an effort to promote best practices and policies in addressing workplace stigma.

Through researching the state of HIV-related stigma in the global economy and building partnerships with companies, allied organizations and governmental agencies throughout Latin America to work on reducing HIV stigma, this strategy guide for employers is a first step.

The core element of ARP's effort is the vital role that public-private partnerships will play in the movement to reduce stigma in these vulnerable regions, and employers have a crucial role to play.

Brazil has set an example for other countries to follow in its national AIDS strategy. The ARP Stigma Reduction Program is designed to help promote continued progress in combating HIV/AIDS-related stigma in Brazil, and to forge partnerships with the growing number of companies in Brazil who recognize that better workplace policies and practices on HIV/AIDS are not only good for society, but also good for business.

NOTE: As ARP is a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, and the research for this guide is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, it has chosen to focus on analysis of data collected from U.S. companies operating in target countries for the Stigma Reduction Program.

While Brazil has the largest population in Latin America, Brazil has the second largest economy in the region, and the eleventh largest in the world. In the Brazilian workforce, 73% of labor is concentrated in the service sector, and 21% is in industrial manufacturing.

Brazil has made impressive advances in recent years in stabilizing its currency, privatizing state-owned enterprises and reducing barriers to trade. As the World Bank's *Brazil Country Brief* points out, Brazil has also made "big strides in reducing social and economic inequality, which are both cause and consequence of the poverty that continues to afflict millions of people."

HIV and the Brazilian Economy

At the same time, Brazil has the largest number of AIDS cases reported in Latin America, accounting for 57% of all AIDS cases in the region, second in the Americas behind the United States. The Brazilian government has mobilized against the AIDS threat and developed a prevention and care strategy that has become a model for other countries. While the UNAIDS *2003 Progress Report on the Global Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic* found that HIV incidence rates in several vulnerable populations is going down in Brazil, HIV is still a fact of life in every sector of the Brazilian economy. The epidemic is very diverse and heterogeneous, threatening a wide range of populations throughout the country, according to the 2004 UNAIDS fact sheet on Brazil.

According to statistics published by the International Labor Organization (ILO), as many as 550,000 people in the Brazilian workforce are HIV-positive. When the Brazilian Ministry of Health launched a campaign to promote voluntary testing in 2003, reports estimated that as much as 2/3 of the HIV-positive population in Brazil is unaware of having the virus.* This is, perhaps, the greatest measure of stigma's potential impact on the epidemic in Brazil, since social stigma plays a significant role in creating fear of testing, or concealment of high-risk behaviors.

A wide range of studies in various regions of the world has shown that economic changes in times of either growth or recession, with resulting migratory shifts in populations, can result in serious and unforeseen swings in HIV infection rates. Brazil has continued to struggle with the challenges of deep poverty and hardship in both rural and urban areas, which has led to widespread economic migration. Conversely, as an emerging economy with tremendous potential, a period of rapid growth and development in the coming decades may also create new migratory trends.

These are all prime conditions for the HIV epidemic to continue challenging Brazil's best efforts at prevention and care, and for HIV to pose a threat to the country's future economic development.

While the government plays a central role in the fight against AIDS in Brazil, and has moved to combat HIV stigma and discrimination in employment, the private sector also has a crucial role to play. Reducing stigma and eliminating discrimination is not only an important human rights issue, but it is an economic necessity.

*BBC News, "Brazil Strikes Anti-HIV Drug Deal." November 14, 2003.



HIV/AIDS Care in Brazil

Medical care in Brazil varies widely between regions of the country. Urban centers have the best care, while rural and interior areas have very limited capacity in terms of hospitals, doctors and technology. While Brazil has a public health system which almost 2/3 of the population uses, it is limited to mostly basic immunization and emergency care with frequent shortages of hospital beds, and patients often cannot expect personalized casework. The best care is found in the private system.

In 1996, the Brazilian federal government launched a pioneering HIV/AIDS care policy of providing free, universal access to antiretrovirals (ARVs) on demand through the public health system. Brazil has achieved 100% coverage for all those who seek ARVs, and this has resulted in a 50% reduction in the AIDS death rate. Many other countries followed Brazil's lead throughout the world with similar success in slashing mortality rates.

But the limitations of the Brazilian health care system overall has impeded the continuum of care for most people with HIV/AIDS. Employers can contribute to the solution through comprehensive efforts to reduce stigma, promote voluntary testing, provide HIV prevention education, and encourage early care intervention for HIV-positive employees, under strict confidentiality protection.

In research interviews conducted by AIDS Responsibility Project with a range of people in Brazil's business community, many shared frank assessments of some of the cultural attitudes that inform the issue of HIV/AIDS in the Brazilian workplace.

There is wide agreement that public education campaigns have made a difference in dispelling myths about people with HIV in Brazil, but that class also plays a role in where stigma is more pervasive. As one HR director of a U.S. company remarked, those with higher incomes in the back offices are more likely to be comfortable with HIV-positive people, but life in the factories and in front-line positions is a different story.

Wherever HIV stigma is present - from the executive offices to the factory floor -- it creates a financial burden for companies which only worsens over time. This is particularly threatening to business in a developing economy with a high number of reported cases, where most persons with HIV are unaware of their status, and the national healthcare capacity is limited.

Stigma Reduction Is Good for Business

Threats to Brazilian Companies from HIV Stigma

■ Decreased Productivity

Stigma encourages secrecy and deception. Employees who either hide their HIV status, or are unaware of it, are more likely to not receive medical treatment when it is most effective. Therefore, those employees will grow sick, be frequently absent from the workplace, incur high medical expense and are more likely to die. This is not only a human tragedy, but a costly blow to the company which has invested in the recruitment, training, productivity and retention of those employees.

■ Poor Financial Assessment of Healthcare Costs

If stigma causes employees to withhold their status, a company which provides medical benefits cannot adequately estimate its long-term risk, and the results will impact provider costs. This is where health insurance providers are increasingly insisting on greater HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs in the workplaces of their clients, in order to eliminate this financial burden. The use of compulsory medical screening in pre-employment is not only illegal in Brazil, but it increases this threat to business as it increases stigma, leading to greater secrecy and concealment.

■ Long-Term Increases in Labor Costs

As globalization puts pressure on developing countries to be more competitive, labor costs will largely determine the direction of investment flows. HIV stigma and discrimination will only increase these costs over the long-term due to lost talent, reduced levels of voluntary testing, concealment or lack of knowledge of HIV-positive status, decreased entry to care and treatment strategies despite higher availability, increased incidence of illness and lost productivity. As labor costs in Brazil are higher than those in many other Latin American economies, HIV stigma left unchecked will take an unnecessary financial toll on every Brazilian business, making them less competitive.

Clearly, a stigma-free workplace creates a more productive and profitable company. A combination of increased voluntary testing, full disclosure to HR staff with confidentiality protection for the employee, and full medical coverage for early ARV intervention at the time of an HIV-positive test result would translate into lower overall costs for companies.

Indeed, until stigma is reduced or eliminated at a company's workplace, none of these economic benefits can be realized. Therefore, it is in every Brazilian company's interest to confront HIV-related stigma directly.

NATIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL (CEN) FOR THE PREVENTION OF HIV/AIDS

In 1997, UNAIDS launched the Global Business Council on HIV/AIDS, and signaled to every nation the important role that business must play in the effort to prevent the spread of HIV, to develop better care and treatment strategies, and to eliminate HIV discrimination in the workplace.

After many years of working to involve the Brazilian private sector more in the national effort against HIV/AIDS, the Ministry of Health created the **National Business Council (CEN) for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS** in 1998.

The **CEN** was charged with leading and coordinating a national corporate response to AIDS, and became a network for information sharing, increased awareness and action. Its current members include companies from a variety of industrial sectors, such as banking, manufacturing, transportation, entertainment, services and consumer goods. It also includes corporate associations, as well as a combination of Brazilian and foreign companies, all operating in Brazil.

As it has grown and expanded its action agenda, **CEN** has participated in national and international efforts to promote greater corporate responsibility on HIV. **CEN** has launched an array of public education campaigns on prevention, and published a manual on HIV in the workplace for companies, with strategies on prevention, intervention and programs.

As a practical matter, companies in Brazil should review their existing policies and practices related to HIV/AIDS to assess whether they adequately address the threat that HIV-related stigma poses to their workplaces.

A 1988 regulation adopted jointly by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labor (Portaria Interministerial No. 3.195, 10 Agosto 1988) launched the Internal Campaign for the Prevention of AIDS (CIPAS) as a means to promote the adoption of formalized efforts within businesses to ensure prevention and education efforts would be undertaken in the workplace.

This was followed by a 1992 regulation by the Ministries of Health, Labor and Administration (Portaria Interministerial No. 869, 11 Agosto 1992) which prohibited the use of HIV screening in pre-employment for public employees, citing the pervasive problem of stigma and discrimination.

Federal law now prohibits compulsory HIV testing.

These legal mechanisms set a tone for businesses to begin to review their own policies and practices, and each company in Brazil should adopt policies which are relevant and effective in the context of their unique workplace environment.

Stigma reduction should be integrated into a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

Workplace Strategies for HIV Stigma Reduction

PREPARATION

1. Company Task Force on HIV/AIDS

For policies to be effective, they should be developed with stakeholder input and subject to periodic review. The best practice is to develop a task force within the company, managed by the Human Resources department but inclusive of labor and management.

Companies should utilize the CIPAS structure if it is most useful; if a CIPAS body or similar task force on HIV has already been formed internally, it should be charged with integrating stigma reduction into all aspects of the company's HIV response.

The task force should be charged with:

- Reviewing policies and practices;
- Measuring the level of HIV stigma in the workplace;
- Collaborating with HIV/AIDS policy-building experts to develop strategies to address deficiencies, and implement them;
- Conducting periodic reviews to ensure effectiveness.

Companies may also consider integrating risk managers and their medical insurance carriers into the task force's work in order to measure the "stigma reduction dividend" that could be realized through a comprehensive strategy to address HIV/AIDS in the workplace, with an emphasis on stigma reduction.

2. Strategy Checklist

In order to ensure that your company is developing the best approach to HIV stigma reduction, your task force should use a strategy checklist to guide its review of the company's existing policies and practices:

" Do all of the company's policies and practices related to HIV conform with local and national laws?

" Is there a non-discrimination policy for life-threatening illnesses?

" Does that policy specifically mention HIV?

" Is there a company policy on confidentiality of medical conditions for applicants, employees and pensioners?

" If yes, what is the enforcement policy?

" How are all of these policies disseminated?

" Does the company participate in CIPAS and how often does it provide HIV education to employees and their families?

" Does the company have a corporate values statement on HIV/AIDS which it communicates to the community?

" How do the company's values translate into community action, and how does it involve people with HIV and their families in the community?

Once your task force has completed the checklist, it should proceed to address each facet of a comprehensive stigma reduction strategy: pre-employment, employment, confidentiality, education/prevention, and philanthropy/community involvement.

ACTION STEPS (BY FOCUS TOPIC)

1. Pre-Employment

A successful HIV stigma reduction effort begins at first contact with potential employees, and the manner in which the company projects its determination to have a stigma-free workplace.

■ **Prohibit HIV screening in pre-employment.** Compulsory testing for HIV is illegal for employers; however, HR professionals reported in interviews that some employers in Brazil have been known to compel applicants through a variety of indirect methods to disclose health conditions such as HIV infection in order to screen them from employment. Despite being illegal, such practices are also self-defeating for companies, as they merely waste recruitment resources and reduce the talent pool. Having a clear and specific policy prohibiting HIV screening gives clear and unambiguous direction to recruitment managers. Informed, voluntary, confidential disclosure and early ARV intervention is the best practice, with the greatest economic benefit to the company, and this should be reflected in policy from the first contact with applicants.

■ **Enact an HIV-specific non-discrimination policy in hiring.** Many companies choose to adopt anti-discrimination policies on life-threatening illnesses which are designed to be all-inclusive, and which do not mention specific illnesses. But not all illnesses are the same, and the size of the AIDS epidemic in Brazil and the social stigma related to AIDS is of

sufficient size to threaten companies. For these reasons, the best practice is to adopt a policy which specifically addresses HIV, and states that HIV status will not be a consideration in hiring. Detailed policies are also best because they give companies room to continue responding to new and specific internal developments on an ongoing basis.

- ▣ **Disseminate the policy effectively.** Ensure that the hiring policy is well known to every applicant to the company, in language that is easy to understand and effectively communicates the company's full intentions. Many companies include a reference on application forms, or in postings at pre-employment facilities.
- ▣ **Include references to medical benefits for HIV/AIDS.** A best practice for reinforcing your non-discrimination policy in hiring is to include information about the medical benefits your company provides to people with HIV. This will strengthen the trust relationship with potential employees, further encouraging voluntary disclosure.
- ▣ **Train pre-employment managers.** Make sure that all training of staff engaged in the hiring process includes a review of HIV-related policies. Every person involved in the hiring process should be prepared to properly answer questions about HIV policies, express appropriate sensitivity to applicants, and to properly deal with situations where applicants voluntarily disclose their HIV status during pre-employment [see also **Confidentiality**].

2. Employment

The core of your company's stigma reduction strategy will be your policies and practices for employees. These will expand beyond those used in pre-employment, and should be designed

with the intention of eradicating HIV stigma from your workplace.

- ▣ **Enact one HIV-specific non-discrimination policy for all employees.** As with pre-employment, some companies choose to adopt non-specific anti-discrimination policies on life-threatening illnesses, but specific policies are the best practice. Also, it is important to maintain one policy for all employees, from senior management to front-line workers, which clearly states that HIV will not be a consideration in employment, promotion or provision of benefits, and that the continuation of the employment relationship is assured for all those who test positive for HIV and voluntarily disclose their status to the company.

This is not only equitable treatment, but it contributes to the bond of trust that is necessary between employees and the company in order to achieve the desired outcomes of the strategy. Any assumed cost benefits for uneven policies (if allowed by law) will result in long-term increases in cost, since stigma will persist.

- ▣ **Disseminate the policy effectively.** As with pre-employment policies, an excellent non-discrimination policy for employees will have limited benefits to the company if it is not properly disseminated. Include your company's HIV-specific policies in as many internal and external corporate communication tools as context would allow: employee manuals, corporate websites, workplace posters, customized educational materials (see *also* **HIV Education and Prevention Programs**), recruitment materials (see *also* **Pre-Employment**), materials for dissemination to employee families, press releases, company presentations before business organizations and conferences, etc.

- ▣ **Use targeted messages to vulnerable populations.** While your non-discrimination policies should be

uniform and apply equally to all, it is a best practice to add the use of targeted messages to employees who may belong to high-risk populations in Brazil. Work in collaboration with policy experts from outside the company (such as governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and policy-building consultants) in order to assess the most appropriate ways to add targeted messages to the dissemination of your non-discrimination policy. Taking this added step is relatively low-cost, but it can yield much greater levels of trust between employees and the company, increasing the likelihood of informed, voluntary disclosure of HIV status.

- ❑ **Train managers and medical staff, and develop strong mechanisms for communication.** As with pre-employment, your Human Resources department should ensure that every manager and all medical staff have been well-trained to implement and enforce all the company's HIV policies.
- ❑ **Provide counseling and full medical benefits for HIV-positive employees who voluntarily disclose their status.** As stated in the section on strategic planning, your task force should consult with your company's medical insurance provider on the long-term cost benefits of policies and practices which achieve the desired outcome of increased voluntary testing, voluntary and early disclosure of HIV-positive status, and immediate ARV intervention. The best practice is to provide counseling for employees who test HIV-positive and voluntarily disclose their status, plus full medical benefits aimed at early ARV intervention. This is the best practice not only because it is socially responsible, but also because it is the most cost-effective.



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM SURVEY: HIV Workplace Policies Lag Expected Impact on Companies in Brazil by Half

In a broad survey of 63 Brazilian companies as part of the World Economic Forum Global Health Initiative's 2003 global survey of business leaders' responses to HIV/AIDS, it was reported that only 24% of the surveyed companies had written policy specifically addressing HIV in the workplace.

At the same time, the survey found that nearly half of the respondents (46%) expect HIV/AIDS to impact their companies, and 41% expect HIV/AIDS to have some or a serious impact on their communities.

This data suggests that only about half of Brazilian companies that expect HIV to impact their workplaces are prepared with HIV-specific policies in place.

3. Confidentiality

Fear of discrimination and social stigma among coworkers are the prime reasons HIV-positive employees conceal their status from employers. Having a non-discrimination policy promises job protection, but a strong medical confidentiality policy builds essential trust between employer and employee, removing the added barrier to disclosure. A workplace environment where HIV stigma is present is a powerful disincentive for employees to consider voluntary testing; it merely encourages denial.

- **Adopt an enforceable confidentiality policy for disclosed medical conditions without exception, and mention HIV specifically.** State clearly that the policy applies to voluntary disclosure of medical conditions to managers and/or Human Resources staff, and that confidentiality applies to all benefits guaranteed in response, such as individual or family counseling and medical care.
- **Disseminate the confidentiality policy along with the non-discrimination policy in all cases.** [see also **Employment**] A specific policy mentioning HIV, which is disseminated along with non-discrimination policy, is key to building trust with employees to seek voluntary testing and to disclose their status. Include references to the enforcement mechanism you create for when confidentiality is violated; this helps strengthen confidence in the policy from employees. If the law requires that cases of HIV or AIDS must be reported to government authorities, be sure to acknowledge this requirement in your policy.

- **Develop and implement a clear information reporting mechanism for employees to use for voluntary disclosure, and add this to dissemination and training.** Managers and medical staff are likely to be the first to learn about HIV in the workforce of your company, and your task force should create mechanisms by which information on an employee's HIV status, or the status of a family member, is received, reported and safeguarded according to your policies. As informed, voluntary, confidential disclosure is the best outcome, your communication chain should be designed to maximize this outcome, and to prevent practices at all levels of management which could create fear, secrecy or confrontation.



“Policy or Prevention Program: Which Comes First?”

There are no specific rules about sequence – first an HIV policy or first a prevention program. In fact, both a company's policy and its prevention program are necessary and will evolve over time, as conditions change.

In companies where policies can take a year or more to be formulated and approved, it is best to move ahead with implementation of the prevention program before the policy is in place.

Where prevention programs exist, is it not necessary to put them on hold until a policy is developed.

Source: Family Health International's *Workplace HIV/AIDS Programs*

4. HIV Education and Prevention Programs

Most HIV education and prevention programs are developed by company medical staff or Human Resources staff in collaboration with CIPAS organizations, non-governmental AIDS organizations, labor organizations, insurance providers or outside medical experts.

Effective HIV education programs are not merely opportunities to share information with employees. They should motivate employees to change their perspective and modify their behavior for better health, and a better workplace environment. Integrating stigma reduction into every educational effort in the workplace is in your company's best interest.

Therefore, in addition to educating employees on HIV transmission, testing and prevention, you should seek to gain a better picture of the state of your workplace, and take direct measures to reduce stigma.

As mentioned in the section on Preparation, it is useful for your company's HIV/AIDS task force to seek some kind of measure of the level of HIV stigma in your company's workplace, however basic. Organized HIV education and prevention programs are a good opportunity to gauge your employees attitudes through various means.

- ▣ **Integrate your company's HIV policies on pre-employment, employment and confidentiality into all aspects your education and prevention programs.** This makes a clear statement to employees that discrimination will not be tolerated at the company, and encourages better communication.

EDUCATION STRATEGIES: General Electric do Brasil

Integrating HIV/AIDS into its health and prevention education for employees, HR Manager Alexandre Douglas de Almeida of GE do Brasil found a wealth of resources available, from the government, their private insurance carrier, from clients with similar programs, hospitals and nongovernmental organizations.

Almeida also found that “front line workers tend to be more active and interested in health educational activities.” The culture of GE's factories and plants are growing more open and conducive to these programs. “Bringing the subject of HIV prevention forward in this context will help the communities where we operate.”

- ▣ **Survey your employees as part of your education effort, and include measures for stigma.** To best understand the educational needs in your workplace, a best practice is to conduct surveys of employees on their knowledge and attitudes regarding HIV. Integrate questions on how employees feel about people with HIV, whether they should be fired or treated differently, or whether employees have experienced discrimination or poor treatment in your workplace because of actual or perceived HIV-positive status of themselves or a family member. Make sure the surveys are anonymous to ensure the most truthful answers. These surveys are helpful in directing your education efforts, as well as measuring progress for periodic policy and practice reviews.

- **Encourage voluntary testing and disclosure and explain the appropriate means for disclosure.** Provide one set of information on recommended sites for HIV testing, with your mechanism for employees to report an HIV-positive result to the company, as well as the non-discrimination and confidentiality policies, and medical benefits available.

At the same time that you motivate your employees and their families to change their behavior to prevent HIV transmission, and to seek testing to learn their status, you should provide equal motivation for employees to voluntarily disclose their status, or the status of a family member, to the company.

By explaining your company's policies and practices while directing employees to the best locations for testing, you will show that the company gives equal importance to prevention and care, and that the company is a trusted entity on the subject. This will also set a high standard of social behavior in the workplace with set rules and guidelines that will highly discourage HIV stigma.

5. Philanthropy and Community Involvement

While your company's action steps are largely focused internally, it is also important to communicate a commitment to HIV stigma reduction out to the public. This encourages other companies to follow your lead, and is a statement of your positive social values. It also plays a role in reducing stigma inside your company.

- **Integrate HIV/AIDS charity into your company's philanthropic activities, particularly those which involve employee participation.** Involving employees in company-sponsored community efforts which benefit people with HIV in the community, through volunteer work, financial donations or other methods, is the best way to use philanthropy and community involvement to reduce HIV stigma in the

workplace. These activities further encourage employees to understand the company's philosophy, and to view the company as trustworthy.

- **Encourage advocacy in the workplace for HIV/AIDS charity work.** If your company does not have resources for philanthropic activities, a no-cost alternative is to encourage employees to organize private efforts among employees to contribute or volunteer time to benefit HIV/AIDS charities in the local community.

PERIODIC REVIEW

Following these action steps, your company should implement a method of periodic review of policies and practices. The most effective means is through your company's HIV/AIDS task force, which should be charged to make regular reviews, but should also have the authority to initiate special reviews in order to investigate and make recommendations should new needs and requirements develop in the effort to reduce HIV stigma.

A cooperative, comprehensive effort to integrate stigma reduction into your company's HIV/AIDS response depends on input, feedback from stakeholders and structural flexibility.

COMPLIANCE REVIEW: 3M

3M has maintained a set of global policies on HIV in the workplace, set by its U.S. parent company for all its divisions for 15 years, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of HIV and providing HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs for its employees and their families. The company also maintains a set of occupational safety policies to prevent communicable infections in their manufacturing operations, inclusive of HIV.

To ensure compliance, 3M routinely brings in auditors from the U.S. to ensure that they are following those policies correctly.

The Challenge Ahead

Without addressing HIV stigma in the workplace, any company's response to HIV will likely be ineffective. The success of individual companies in addressing the threat which HIV poses to them today and into the future will have a broader impact on national economies throughout the world.

Given the pioneering efforts by the Brazilian government, and the growing international partnerships between governments and non-governmental organizations in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the private sector is poised to play a decisive role in this important shift towards practices that are good for the Brazilian people, and good for the Brazilian economy.

American companies and organizations have an important role to play in Brazil as well, since the collective experiences of what has succeeded in the United States are a valuable contribution to the effort to reduce stigma related to AIDS in Brazil and throughout the world. Most of the companies surveyed and interviewed for the ARP Stigma Reduction Program described the eradication of stigma as a matter of social values, not just an economic

consideration. There is strong common ground between Americans and Brazilians on this belief, and it is the basis for an ongoing partnership.

The AIDS Responsibility Project will continue to promote corporate leadership in the AIDS stigma reduction effort, and work with its partners to offer all companies in Brazil the opportunity to explore new and innovative ways to improve HIV workplace policies, increase HIV education and prevention efforts for employees, strengthen confidence between employees and management on HIV status disclosure, and to encourage greater philanthropic and community involvement activities around AIDS.

Brazil is a leader in the world struggle against AIDS, and a model for Latin America. Progress there in the effort to end AIDS-related stigma will have ramifications far beyond its borders.

CONTACT GUIDE FOR COMPANIES

As many companies have employed a variety of methods to respond to HIV/AIDS in the workplace, this practical guide is a review of best practices and policies to integrate stigma reduction into their overall HIV/AIDS strategies.

There are many outside organizations and agencies that companies in Brazil can contact to collaborate on developing and implementing effective policies and practices for their workplaces which incorporate all the aspects of a good response.

Programa Nacional de DST e Aids

Ministerio da Saúde – Unidade III
Av. W 3 Norte SEPN 511
CEP 70750-543 Brasilia-DF
(61) 448-8000
www.aids.gov.br

Conselho Empresarial Nacional (CEN)

(11) 4347-2132
www.aids.gov.br/cen/conselho.html

Programa Estadual DST/AIDS

R. Santa Cruz, 81, Vila Mariana
CEP 04121-000 São Paulo-SP
(11) 5084-6143
www.crt.saude.sp.gov.br

USAID/Brazil

U.S. Embassy
SES Q. 801 lote 03
70403-900 Brasilia-DF
(61) 312-7000
www.usaidbrasil.org.br

American Chamber of Commerce of São Paulo

Rua da Paz
CEP 04713-001 São Paulo-SP
(11) 5180-3804
www.amcham.com.br

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METHODOLOGY

This strategy guide for employers in Brazil reflects the ongoing research of the AIDS Responsibility Project (ARP) Stigma Reduction Program in Latin America, which was modeled in Mexico in partnership with POLICY Project, USAID/Mexico and the American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico City, and expanded to Brazil in partnership with USAID/Brazil and the American Chamber of Commerce of São Paulo.

The findings in this guide on the state of HIV stigma in the workplace, its impact on companies, and the range of policies and practices among leading U.S. employers in Latin America, were derived from a combination of published sources and research data collected by the ARP Stigma Reduction Program from U.S. companies operating in Latin America, including: 3M (Mexico); Citibank (Mexico); Cadbury Adams (Mexico); Duke Energy International (Brazil); Electronic Data Systems (Brazil); Eli Lilly (Brazil, Mexico); Federal Express (Mexico); Ford Motor Company (Mexico); GE International (Brazil, Mexico); General Motors (Mexico); IBM (Mexico); Intel (Mexico); Kraft (Mexico); Merck Sharp & Dohme (Brazil, Mexico); Monsanto do Brasil, Ltda. (Brazil); Pepsico (Mexico); Pfizer (Brazil, Mexico); PricewaterhouseCoopers, S.C. (Mexico); Procter & Gamble (Mexico); Schering-Plough, (Mexico); Tyco Electronics (Mexico); Visteon Sistemas Automotivos Ltda. (Brazil); Wal-Mart (Brazil, Mexico); and Xerox (Mexico). Companies which reported global policies on HIV/AIDS that apply to all divisions were 3M, Federal Express, Ford Motor Company, Pepsico, Procter & Gamble and Xerox.

The company data from Brazilian divisions was collected by written surveys and interviews by Kevin Ivers of Center Strategies (Washington, D.C.), Robert J. Kabel of ARP and Claudia Quiñónez of Business Communications Brasil (BCBR) (São Paulo).

Portions of the company data were published in the ARP publication *HIV/AIDS in the Workplace: 2004 Corporate Survey Report* for Mexico (September 2004). Other portions of the data, and additional data collected subsequent to this guide for Brazil will be published in an upcoming ARP report entitled *HIV/AIDS in the Workplace: 2004 Corporate Survey Report* for Brazil.

The model strategies developed for this guide were developed from various published sources referenced herein, enriched and given context by the company data collected by ARP, and by the more than two decades of experience in policy development by the board, staff and consultants of ARP in the United States and abroad.

RESEARCH MATERIAL FROM PUBLISHED SOURCES

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The AIDS Responsibility Project's Stigma Reduction Program was designed and drawn from two decades of collective experience and involvement among ARP's staff, board members and consultants in the development of effective HIV/AIDS policies, programs and response strategies in the United States and worldwide. During this time, hundreds of people from government, the private sector, political organizations and non-profit policy and service organizations have contributed valuably to the knowledge and strategic thinking that is represented in this program's goals and purposes. We wish to acknowledge all those individuals, companies and agencies whose knowledge, input, critiques and insights have shaped corporate, national and global policy for the better in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and whose contributions were essential in the eventual development of the Stigma Reduction Program.

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