Down On the Pharm

Loose lips fill ’scrips

May 1, 1998 By Scott Hess

A Michigan man with AIDS got the last word in “The Case of the Loudmouthed Pharmacist.” In January, Stanley Grzadzinski reached an out-of-court settlement with Arbor Drugs after discovering that his corner-apothecary clerk had gabbed to her son about his AIDS ’scrip. Grzadzinski, who had not yet disclosed his HIV status to his kids, alleged that they were taunted at school and called “AIDS babies” by the pharmacist’s braying brat. Michigan’s medical confidentiality law includes prescription data, which is part of a medical record, and pharmacists who leak such info can be penalized. Arbor settled out of court and coughed up an undisclosed amount to the G-man.

A similar ’scrip slip occurred in Walnut Creek, California, when a Longs Drugs druggist was accused of divulging a man’s HIV status to his former wife and two kids. The diagnosis became a family affair when the clerk offered the PWA’s meds to his ex while she was picking up her own prescription. When she asked what the drugs were for, the loose-lipped clerk reportedly quipped: “Don’t you know? It’s for AIDS.” According to the PWA’s lawyer, Daniel Slijepcevich, once informed of his condition, the ex tried to limit her former hubby’s custody rights. The PWA sued Longs for invasion of privacy, emotional distress and violating state regulations that govern the release of medical info. Slijepcevich said that Longs treated the incident like a *Brady Bunch* episode -- “They had a very cavalier attitude about the whole thing.” The case was pending as *POZ* went to press.

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