HIV-Related Discrimination in the Workplace

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In the United States and abroad, a barrage of incidents reveals that HIV discrimination in the workplace remains rampant. Consider:

- In Florida, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) refused an Air Force veteran a job because he was HIV positive. (The TSA has since reached an agreement with the American Civil Liberties Union to review its job policies for job applicants with HIV.)
- In Utah, a convenience store chain is paying damages after firing a clerk two weeks after learning he was HIV positive.
- In Pennsylvania, a staffing firm violated federal law by withdrawing an offer of employment to a certified nursing assistant because he was HIV positive, even after a doctor cleared him to perform all job duties.
- In Mexico, an HIV-positive man was forced to sign resignation papers after employers found out about his status.
- In Swaziland, civil regulations ban pilots who have HIV or tuberculosis from flying planes from the only commercial airport in the town of Manzini.

What does this mean? A huge economic and social loss. If those of us living with a costly, chronic illness are forced into unemployment, we lose not only our health insurance, but also our ability to contribute (through taxes) to the welfare programs we're being forced into. Discrimination is not only wrong, it also detracts from the bottom line for both people living with HIV—and the societies in which they live .

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