China Upholds HIV Entry Ban Through Olympics

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China will not revoke a ban on foreigners with HIV/AIDS ahead of the Olympics despite recently lifting the ban on visitors with leprosy, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reports (afp.google.com, 7/31).

Sixty-seven countries have some sort of HIV-specific laws restricting entry of people living with the virus. On July 30, President George W. Bush signed a law to lift the United States' own long-standing restrictions on HIV-positive foreigners as part of his President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

China requires short-term visitors to declare their HIV status at the border, while long-term stays require compulsory tests, according to the Global Database of HIV-related travel restrictions.

Connie Osborne, a senior World Health Organization's advisor on HIV/AIDS in China, says reducing the stigma of people with HIV was one of the most crucial steps for China to address.

"That is still an ongoing battle," she says. "We have won a few battles, but we have also lost a few."

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