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***Bulletin No. 22
December 20, 1985***

AIDS Policies For Correctional Facilities

The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Social Services have jointly adopted official policies regarding AIDS in correctional facilities. These policies also have been officially endorsed by the Anchorage Medical Society, Alaska Public Health Association, Department of Health and Human Services of the Municipality of Anchorage, and the AIDS Task Force appointed by John Pugh, Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services. Soon to be released are policies pertaining to AIDS for universities, schools, day care, and foster care, for EMS personnel, firemen, and policemen; and general policies related to AIDS at the worksite.

AIDS Policy for Correctional Facilities

Department of Corrections
Department of Health and Social Services

December 13, 1985

Background

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is caused by infection with a virus known as human T-cell lymphotropic virus or HTLV-III. There is a wide spectrum of HTLV-III infections, ranging from infection in the absence of signs and symptoms at one end to infection with confirmed AIDS and a high degree of mortality at the other end.

1. Routine screening of individuals admitted to correctional facilities is not warranted based on available data.
2. All medical evidence to date finds that there is no risk of transmission of AIDS virus from casual person-to-person contact.
3. If an individual is known to have AIDS or is known to be infected with HTLV-III, the individual, if necessary for reasons of their personal safety, may be held in a separate area.

4. Homosexual men and persons who abuse parenteral administered drugs will remain at high risk for AIDS. Preventing HTLV-III infections depends upon education and counseling to prevent sexual transmission and transmission among intravenous drug users.
5. Since individuals from groups known to be at high risk of AIDS infection are likely to be admitted to correctional facilities, efforts should be increased directed at reducing behaviors that could lead to HTLV-III transmission.
6. To be safe from risk of exposure to HTLV-III infection, persons should avoid any sexual activity that involves the exchange of body fluids such as semen with individuals known or suspected to be infected. Such preventive measures as condoms, diaphragms, or spermicides offer some theoretical protection, but their efficacy is unproved.