

Name-Based HIV Reporting About the New Law

In 2007, Vermont passed a law that requires doctors to report the names of all people who have tested positive for HIV to the Vermont Dept. of Health. This was done to bring Vermont in line with federal guidelines. If Vermont law is not in line with these federal guidelines, we could lose funding for HIV/AIDS services.

What is Name-Based Reporting?

- Patient names are sent to the Health Department by doctors when HIV is diagnosed.
- Patient names are kept secure and private at the state's Health Dept. No names are sent to the federal government. Instead, the Health Dept. creates a code for data sent to the CDC.
- Names of patients with HIV or AIDS will not be sent to any federal agency.

22 Years of Secure and Confidential Records

- Vermont has used name-based reporting for AIDS cases for 22 years.
- Records are stored at the Health Department in a stand alone computer in a secure, locked room. The computer is password-protected.
- Paper forms are also secure. After data are entered, the part of the form with names and addresses is removed and shredded. The remaining form is stored in a locked file in a locked room.
- Very few Health Department staff have access to the records.
- Also, all employees of the Health Dept. must take records privacy training and sign confidentiality statements.
- Vermont reports confirmed cases of AIDS to the CDC, but does not report an person's name or health care provider information, such as names or phone numbers

Good Reasons for Making this Change

- Under the old reporting system for HIV cases it is hard to know the sureness of Vermont's HIV reporting.
- Name-based reporting should improve Vermont's data, avoid duplicates and protect privacy.
- Better data will help the Health Dept. to better describe HIV/AIDS in Vermont, and guide HIV/AIDS services for Vermonters.
- The move to name-based reporting will help ensure full federal funding for HIV/AIDS services.