



ALCC

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State's Discriminatory HIV Principal Notification Law Finally Repealed ***Decade-long repeal effort by AIDS Legal Council of Chicago and allies a major victory***

AIDS Legal Council of Chicago ("ALCC") is pleased to announce that the Illinois Senate has voted to repeal the state's quarter century-old, discriminatory HIV principal notification law. Repeal passed this afternoon by a vote of 38 to 13 with bi-partisan support. ALCC Staff attorney Colleen Boraca, who recently testified in Springfield about the legal concerns with the law and has worked tirelessly for repeal said, "Twenty-five years ago, ALCC was founded to help combat discrimination against those facing HIV/AIDS. After a long, challenging road the Illinois legislature has agreed that this discrimination against HIV+ children and their families will no longer be tolerated. Families no longer have to worry about how their lives will be turned upside down when school principals learn of the HIV diagnoses of children. They can turn their total focus toward the health of their children."

Illinois has long been the only state with a law mandating that when a state or local health department receives a report of an HIV-positive student, that child's school principal must be notified and he or she can then share this information with "other persons as may be necessary." For years ALCC has fought to repeal this outdated, vague, and discriminatory law. Adolescents are the largest rate of new HIV infections in Illinois, but many refuse testing as they do not want their status to become public knowledge to school officials. This principal notification law stands in direct contrast to the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, which emphasizes the importance of testing as a way to reduce transmission. This repeal is long overdue.

Executive Director Ann Hilton Fisher sees this repeal as a tremendous win for ALCC and the entire coalition that fought for repeal, but most importantly as a victory for students across the state. "This is a great victory. It's a victory for the children with HIV and their families, whose privacy will now be guaranteed. It's a victory for every teen who wants to be tested but has been deterred by this antiquated law. And it's a victory for all of us, because easier and safer access to HIV testing ultimately means less HIV in our communities. I'm so grateful to our sponsors and so proud of the work that Chicago's wonderful advocacy community has done on this bill," she stated. The bill now moves to the desk of Governor Quinn, who is expected to sign it.

ALCC is particularly grateful to the principal House and Senate sponsors, Representative La Shawn Ford (D-8) and Senator Iris Martinez (D-20), as well as our coalition partners, including Lurie Children's Hospital, ACLU of Illinois, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Family

and Children AIDS Network, and Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health, among others.

Founded 25 years ago, ALCC works to preserve, promote, and protect the legal rights of men, women, children, and families in the metropolitan Chicago area impacted by HIV and AIDS. The Council provides free direct legal services to people in need, educates the public about HIV-related legal issues, and advocates for social policies that ensure fair treatment for all people affected by HIV and AIDS.

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