

641—11.18(141A) Direct notification of an identifiable third party by a physician, physician assistant or the department.

11.18(1) Direct notification shall be used when an HIV-infected person is having continuing contact with a sexual or needle-sharing partner who is unaware of the person's infection and when both of the following situations exist:

a. A physician or physician assistant for the HIV-infected person is of the good-faith opinion that the nature of the continuing contact through sexual intercourse or the sharing of drug injecting equipment poses an imminent danger of HIV transmission to the third party.

b. When the physician or physician assistant believes in good faith that the HIV-infected person, despite strong encouragement, has not and will not warn the third party and will not participate in the voluntary partner notification program.

11.18(2) The department or a physician or a physician assistant may reveal the identity of an HIV-infected person pursuant to this rule only to the extent necessary to protect a third party from the direct threat of transmission. Notification of a person pursuant to this rule shall be made confidentially. Nothing in this rule shall be interpreted to create a duty to warn third parties of the danger of exposure to HIV through contact with an HIV-infected person.

11.18(3) When the physician or physician assistant is of the good-faith opinion and belief that third-party notification should be performed, notification of a person pursuant to this rule shall be made:

a. Directly by the physician or physician assistant in accordance with subrules 11.18(4), 11.18(5) and 11.18(7), or

b. By the department at the request of the physician or physician assistant in accordance with subrules 11.18(6) and 11.18(7).

11.18(4) Notification by the physician or physician assistant. Prior to notification of a third party by an HIV-infected person's physician or physician assistant, the physician or physician assistant shall make reasonable efforts to inform, in writing, the HIV-infected person. The written information shall state that, due to the nature of the person's continuing contact through sexual intercourse or the sharing of drug injecting equipment with the third party and the physician's or physician assistant's belief that the HIV-infected person, despite strong encouragement, has not and will not warn the third party and will not participate in the voluntary partner notification program, the physician or physician assistant is forced to take action to provide notification to the third party. The physician or physician assistant, when reasonably possible, shall provide the following information to the HIV-infected person:

a. The nature of the disclosure and the reason for the disclosure.

b. The anticipated date of disclosure.

c. The name of the party or parties to whom disclosure is to be made.

NOTE: Reasonable efforts to inform, in writing, the HIV-infected person shall be deemed satisfied when the physician or physician assistant delivers the written notice in person or directs a written notice to the HIV-infected person's last-known address by restricted certified mail, return receipt requested, at least five days prior to the anticipated date of disclosure to the third party.

11.18(5) When performed by the HIV-infected person's physician or physician assistant, notification of the third party and any disclosure concerning the purpose of that notification shall be made in person. However, initial contact with the third party may be made by telephone, mail, or other electronic means to arrange the meeting with the physician or physician assistant at the earliest opportunity to discuss an important health matter. The nature of the health matter to be discussed shall not be revealed in the telephone call, letter, or other electronic message.

11.18(6) Notification by the department.

a. The physician or physician assistant attending the HIV-infected person shall provide by telephone to the department any relevant information provided by the HIV-infected person regarding any party with whom the HIV-infected person has had sexual relations or has shared drug injecting equipment. The information may include the third party's name, address, telephone number, and any other locating information known to the physician or physician assistant. The department shall use the information in accordance with procedures established for the voluntary partner notification program.

b. Notification of the third party and any disclosure concerning the purpose of that notification shall be made in person. However, initial contact with the third party may be made by telephone, mail, or other electronic means to arrange the meeting with the department representative. The nature of the matter to be discussed shall not be revealed in the telephone call, letter, or other electronic message.

11.18(7) Confidentiality. The HIV-infected person's physician or physician assistant and the department shall protect the confidentiality of the third party and the HIV-infected person. The identity of the HIV-infected person shall remain confidential unless it is necessary to reveal it to the third party so that the third party may avoid exposure to HIV. If the identity of the HIV-infected person is revealed, the third party shall be presented with a statement in writing at the time of disclosure which includes the following or substantially similar language: "Confidential information revealing the identity of a person infected with HIV has been disclosed to you. The confidentiality of this information is protected by state law. State law prohibits you from making any further disclosure of the information without the specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains. Any breach of the required confidential treatment of this information subjects you to legal action and civil liability for monetary damages. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose."

11.18(8) Immunity. A health care provider attending an HIV-infected person has no duty to disclose to or to warn third parties of the dangers of exposure to HIV through contact with the HIV-infected person and is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, for failure to disclose to or warn third parties of the condition of the HIV-infected person.

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