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**HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD PARTNERS SINGAPORE NATIONAL EMPLOYERS
FEDERATION TO PROVIDE COMPANIES WITH A PRACTICAL THREE-STEP
APPROACH FOR WORKPLACE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIV/AIDS**
**These three-tier applications focus on Workplace Education, Creating a Supportive
Workplace and HR Policies**

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) has partnered the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) to provide HR managers with practical steps to develop and implement workplace prevention and management of HIV/AIDS.

2. These steps form part of the revamped SNEF HIV Workplace Guidelines. First released in 1993, the guidelines are reviewed periodically to ensure they stay timely and relevant.
3. In this latest overhaul, the addition of an easy-to-follow three-tier application aims to strengthen HIV/AIDS education and management at the workplace, while addressing possible stigmatisation by recommending adjustments in HR management and policies.
4. To help companies develop and implement comprehensive and effective HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives, the guidelines are also tiered progressively:

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Implementing Workplace Education	Achieving a Supportive Workplace	Establishing Workplace Policies
Educating employees about HIV/AIDS and protective measures, so as to mitigate fear as well as behaviours that may put them at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.	Educating employers so that, with a sound understanding of HIV/AIDS, internal processes can be adjusted to support HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and employees living with HIV/AIDS.	Establishing workplace policies to eliminate prejudices and discrimination against employees living with HIV/AIDS.

5. “HIV/AIDS is still a topic not widely discussed, and employers who want to support their employees living with HIV/AIDS may not know where to begin. By putting together three tiers of practical and easy-to-comprehend steps in developing and implementing workplace prevention and management of HIV/AIDS, we want to provide companies with a valuable tool they can use to create an enabling work environment progressively,” said Dr Amy Khor, Minister of State for Health and Chairperson of the National HIV Policy Committee.

6. HIV/AIDS remains feared and little understood, with misconceptions revolving around it and its transmission. Educating employees and employers on HIV/AIDS will help reduce fear and discrimination, allowing people living with HIV/AIDS to continue making valuable contributions in their workplaces.

7. There are now almost 4,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Singapore, and about 70 per cent of them are working adults between 30 and 59 years old. While some employers are establishing workplace environments and HR policies that are supportive of those living with HIV/AIDS, more needs to be done to ensure such enabling measures.

8. “The new SNEF HIV Workplace Guidelines promote positive attitudes in place of deterrent measures at the workplace. HPB, in partnership with SNEF, is distributing the set of guidelines to 4,000 companies. To promote its implementation, HPB and SNEF are hosting a lunch for the CEOs of various businesses and industries for the first time, so as

to get a commitment from decision-makers at the highest points of leverage,” said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive, HPB. “Beyond this, HPB has developed innovative and user-friendly initiatives to destigmatise HIV/AIDS. For instance, we ‘bundled’ HIV with more general infectious diseases such as the flu and tuberculosis in our Workplace Infectious Disease Education (WIDE) programme. This proved so effective that the reach of our messages on HIV/AIDS issues jumped fourfold, from 7,000 employees in 2010 to 27,000 in 2011.”

9. Other creative outreach programmes to reach out to working adults include workshops held at workplaces and various lunchtime road shows that entertain as well as they educate.

10. HPB also provides interested companies free roving interactive exhibits, collaterals for both the employer and employee, and talks by medical professionals.

11. “Employers, however, continue to play an important role in Singapore in terms of raising awareness and managing employees with HIV/AIDS at workplaces. Hence, the updating of the SNEF Guidelines on managing HIV/AIDs at workplaces is timely. The introduction of the new three-tier approach will also help our employers advance the management of HIV/AIDS at their workplaces more effectively,” said Dr Lim Suet Wun, SNEF Council member and Executive Vice-President of Parkway Group Healthcare Pte Ltd.

12. Private companies who have led the way in creating an enabling work environment include Keppel Shipyard, Keppel offshore & Marine and Standard Chartered Bank, along with public organisations such as the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports.

13. About 50 other private companies are pledging to start adopting the set of practical applications, taking the first and most important step in creating a productive and non-discriminatory workplace.

14. “To ensure that our employees receive relevant and correct information on HIV/AIDS, Keppel Shipyard has been working with HPB and the AIDS Business Alliance (ABA) on our Health and Safety Programme, which includes a permanent exhibit at our Safety Training Complex,” said Mr Nelson Yeo, Managing Director, Keppel Shipyard Limited.

15. “Positive HIV/AIDS workplace policies provide the fundamental framework for a company to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and manage its impact. Now that HPB has introduced a set of practical applications for workplace education, HR policies and HR management, I hope the SNEF HIV Workplace Guidelines will pave the way for sustainable HIV/AIDS programmes and policies in workplaces throughout Singapore,” said Mr Zulkifli Bin Baharudin, Chairman, ABA.

16. HPB, in partnership with SNEF, has sought input from ABA, the Ministry of Health and Communicable Disease Centre/Tan Tock Seng Hospital to develop the SNEF HIV Workplace Guidelines, which are benchmarked against international standards.

ANNEX A

SNEF HIV WORKPLACE GUIDELINES:

APPLICATIONS, KEY MESSAGES AND ACTIONS REQUIRED IN TIERS 1, 2 AND 3.

ANNEX B

CASE STUDIES:

KEPPEL SHIPYARD AND STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

Issued by Health Promotion Board

TIER 1 IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE EDUCATION

Objective: Integrating HIV education into workplace health initiatives

To the general public, HIV remains a much feared and little understood disease. There remains much misconception surrounding the disease and its transmission. Educating your employees on HIV/AIDS enhances their understanding of HIV and its prevention, thereby mitigating fear as well as behaviours that put them at risk of contracting HIV.

APPLICATION

Various ways in which HIV education can be instituted at workplaces:

- (i) Distribution of education materials
- (ii) Lunchtime workplace talks and workshops
- (iii) Interactive road shows and edutainment (for migrant workers)
- (iv) Integration of HIV education component into orientation induction programmes

KEY MESSAGES

Equipping leaders with specific information to manage internal processes.

To build an environment that facilitates both HIV prevention and support elements, it is advantageous for leaders and HR managers to:

- (i) Understand that day-to-day contact at the workplace with an employee with HIV does not put employees at risk of HIV infection
- (ii) Receive detailed information on the treatment and support services available for people living with HIV in order to make reasonable accommodation for their medical needs including job reallocation
- (iii) Lead the way in removing stigma against the employee with HIV to encourage a supportive work environment

ACTION

For more in-depth understanding of HIV/AIDS, treatment and services, visit:

- (i) **Action for AIDS** – information on local HIV clinical services and workplace consultation
<http://www.afa.org.sg/support.php>
- (ii) **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** – detailed information on HIV infection and treatment
<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/>

DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL STATUS

An employee is generally not obliged to disclose his/her HIV status unless there is a contractual obligation to do so.

If such information is disclosed to employers:

- (i) This is normally given in confidence and employers should maintain strict confidentiality of this information
- (ii) Employers may incur civil liabilities if they disclose such information

At this point, it is important to highlight that all employees' health records are deemed confidential, regardless of their condition.

- Refer to section 5.5 for the maintenance of confidentiality of the employee's medical condition

TIER 2 ACHIEVING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Objective: Enhancing leadership knowledge and ensuring confidentiality

As role models and managers in the company, a sound understanding of HIV can help guide adjustments to internal processes that can positively affect HIV prevention programmes as well as employees living with HIV in the workplace.

APPLICATION

A supportive environment for employees with HIV can be achieved by:

- (i) Mitigating fear of HIV in the workplace through intensive education programmes (interactive workshops, edutainment shows)
- (ii) Adjusting internal work processes to accommodate needs of employee with HIV where possible
- (iii) Maintaining the confidentiality of the employee's HIV status as of other chronic medical conditions

KEY MESSAGES

In helping employees to understand their risks for HIV and AIDS, a basic HIV workplace education program should include information on transmission and risks.

HIV CAN BE ACQUIRED THROUGH:

- (i) Unprotected sexual intercourse with a person living with HIV/AIDS
- (ii) Receiving HIV infected blood or blood products
- (iii) Exposure to HIV infected blood through the sharing of injection needles
- (iv) Mother to child transmission through pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding – if the mother is HIV positive.

HIV CANNOT BE ACQUIRED THROUGH:

- (i) Normal workplace settings and casual contact (e.g. shaking hands)
- (ii) Sharing of utensils and common surfaces

ACTION

To help business leaders institute workplace HIV education, an array of services is available to companies at no cost.

- (i) Education materials – pamphlets, posters, exhibits
- (ii) Lunchtime talks – a 1-hour interactive talk on HIV, TB and Flu

For the above services, please contact:

Singapore National Employers Federation
WHP@snef.org.sg
Tel: 6827 6957

- (iii) Bridges of Hope – an interactive 3-hour workshop with discussions, games and audiovisual materials for enhanced education on HIV
- (iv) Road shows – road shows and edutainment shows for migrant and blue collar workers

For the above service, please contact:

Health Promotion Board
HPB_CDE@hpb.gov.sg
Tel: 6463 3178

As a result, no special precautions need to be taken to prevent HIV infection in normal workplace contacts, other than providing a safe and healthy work environment.

- Refer to section 2.4 and 5.3 of the guidelines for education of employees on the prevention of HIV/AIDS

TIER 3 ESTABLISHING WORKPLACE POLICIES

Objective: Establishing workplace policies that promote equality

The hallmark of every company's commitment to eliminate workplace prejudices and discrimination is the institution of policies to view HIV/AIDS the same as any other chronic illness, with reasonable accommodation.

APPLICATION

Company policies should aim to:

- (i) Treat HIV/AIDS as any other chronic medical condition
- (ii) Focus on assisting and supporting the employee living with HIV to maintain an economically active and productive life
- (iii) Include the support of the chief executive officer and higher level management
- (iv) Be communicated effectively to all employees so that the enterprise's stand regarding HIV/AIDS is clear

KEY MESSAGES

Legal position regarding employment issues relating to HIV/AIDS

There is no specific employment legislation regarding HIV infection/AIDS in the workplace however issues arising from HIV infection/AIDS at work are subject to:

- (i) Employment Act
- (ii) Industrial Relations Act
- (iii) Infectious Diseases Act

If there is reasonable risk of contracting HIV during the course of work, then reasonable precautions need to be established to protect employees from accidental exposure to HIV.

- Refer to section 4 in guidelines for more information relating to laws and statutes regarding employment issues relating to HIV and AIDS
- Refer to section 5.12 of the guidelines for healthcare employees such as doctors and nurses

TERMINATING THE SERVICES OF AN EMPLOYEE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

An employer should not terminate the services of an employee living with HIV/AIDS simply because he/she is living with HIV/AIDS. Highly active HIV antiretroviral therapy allows people living with HIV to lead normal, healthy and productive lives for many years. By maintaining employment, the employer will be helping the employee with HIV/AIDS to afford treatment and remain healthy and economically active.

- Refer to section 5.9 and 5.15 for the available care and support for employees with HIV

ACTION

The following resources may assist you in formulating workplace policies:

- (i) **Action for AIDS** – consultation services for workplace matters relating to HIV
info@afa.org.sg
Tel: 6254 0212
- (ii) **International Labour Organisation (ILO) code of practice** – international recommendations to assist in formulating workplace policies
http://www.ilo.org/public/1bdoc/ilo/2001/101B09_133_engl.pdf

ANNEX B

CASE STUDY 1: KEPPEL SHIPYARD

TIER 1: HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programmes

- Keppel recognises the advantage of adding HIV education into their Health and Safety programmes to offer a more holistic health promotion package.
- Keppel Shipyard has implemented a workplace programme that includes information on HIV prevention since 2010.
- This programme has been integrated into their ongoing Health and Safety Induction for new employees as well as contractors.
- The content is supplemented by an exhibit on HIV prevention, which has been tailored to meet the needs of their employees.
- This exhibit is a permanent fixture in the induction centre located at their Shipyard, at Safety Training Complex.
- Employee response to the prevention education provided has been positive.

CASE STUDY 2: STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

TIERS 1-3: Workplace Education, Achieving a Supportive Workplace and Establishing Workplace Policies

- Through their 'Living with HIV' programme, Standard Chartered Bank has developed a highly effective workplace education model that has since been rolled out to all their employees, as well as external audiences such as customers, suppliers and wider communities. It equips staff with knowledge on how to avoid becoming infected, and also how to avoid infecting others.
- Standard Chartered's 'Living with HIV' programme involves delivering education through employee peer educators, called HIV Champions, who conduct face-to-face HIV/AIDS awareness sessions. Employees volunteer to become Champions, after which they are educated on HIV/AIDS issues and taught how to communicate effectively. They are also equipped with a choice of educational resources.
- The Champions are able to adapt their campaigns to their own local and cultural contexts. With an approximate ratio of one Champion to 150 employees, the Champions then begin a programme of HIV/AIDS education sessions for their colleagues. At the last count at the end of 2011, 450,000 Champions had been activated globally.
- Standard Chartered Bank also has a comprehensive HIV/AIDS Policy in place to ensure that those employees living with HIV have the necessary care and support in the workplace to continue being productive employees. More information can be found at http://www.standardchartered.com/documents/hiv-or-aids-policy/sc_policy_hivAids.pdf