

HIV/AIDS POLICY

Preamble/Information

Human immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks the immune system and weakens the body's defences against infection. If left untreated, HIV eventually leads to the person contracting Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and becoming susceptible to opportunistic infections. HIV/AIDS can be contracted through unprotected sexual intercourse, sharing infected needles, through infected blood transfusion, and mother to child transmission through childbirth or breastfeeding.

1. Policy Statement

NSML shall promote health education and act in accordance with internationally acceptable medical standards and health regulations as they relate to HIV/AIDS.

2. Health Education

The NSML objective is to provide a healthy environment for its work force and community. The company shall continue to support HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and health education of its staff and their families.

3. Prevention and Protection

NSML shall continue to promote prevention efforts through information and education, and support changes in attitudes and behaviour. Precautionary measures shall be taken in all the Company's facilities to prevent the transmission of HIV to staff. Internationally accepted precautionary guidelines shall be followed by medical staff in order to protect themselves and their patients from any risk of exposure to HIV infection. All the retainer hospitals used by the company shall be encouraged to meet these standards.

Testing/Screening

No NSML staff and others will be tested for HIV without his or her signed consent even when there is medical reason for the test. Mandatory testing for HIV shall **not** be conducted as a condition for employment or routinely while in employment; however confidential voluntary screening shall be arranged for employees wishing to know their HIV status.

4. Care and Support

Solidarity, care and support shall guide the response of NSML to HIV/AIDS patients. NSML shall offer counselling and support services to help employees and their families cope with social, emotional and other concerns associated with HIV/AIDS.

5. Non-Discrimination

NSML shall accommodate its staff and others (includes contractual and temporary staff) with HIV/AIDS as with any other illness as long as they meet acceptable standards of work performance and levels of work attendance, and do not pose a health/safety threat. There shall be no stigmatisation or discrimination against workers on the basis of real or perceived HIV status. This includes contractual and temporary staff.


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