

# Update on Workplace-Based Prevention Program on Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS

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## **Abstract**

The study is a follow-up of the initial assessment carried out by the Occupational Safety and Health Center in 1998 to determine the sustainability of response of the private sector to the HIV/AIDS campaign, as well as to determine what initiatives they have taken to implement the Philippine AIDS Law or Republic Act 8504. Questionnaires were sent to the top 500 companies as well as to the 106 companies who participated in the 1998 initial survey, with replies from 5% percent and 20% of respondents, respectively.

Results of the survey revealed that activities on STD/HIV/AIDS usually implemented by companies were dissemination of printed materials such as brochures and leaflets and the conduct of seminars, training and lectures; the nature of which were still discrete and unsustained activities, with some exceptions. However, despite the provisions of RA 8504 on non-mandatory testing and employment of persons with HIV, there were still some companies who required HIV testing and which had discriminatory policies specifying not to employ HIV (+) individuals. This may be explained from the fact that only 25% to 59% of the companies have heard of the Philippines AIDS Law. From the results, it was apparent that further and more dynamic advocacy is needed to make the workforce aware of RA 8504 and its specific provisions for the labor sector, which basically dwell on the need to provide adequate information and

education on RA8504, and to sanction discriminatory practices against HIV positive persons. One major core message is that HIV infection is still rather low in the country, and that Filipinos are still in an ideal situation where focus can still be given to primary prevention