

# **GACHA**

**Governor's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS**

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## **Position Statement on HIV Reporting: December 9, 2005**

The Washington Governor's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (GACHA) notes Washington State's current name-to-code system for HIV reporting and surveillance works. It allows public health officials to accurately and thoroughly track actual disease and monitor trends, the very goals set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC has never proved otherwise. In fact, all along the CDC led Washington to believe its system would be acceptable. To learn otherwise now shows a breach of trust and is a demonstration of intellectual dishonesty on behalf of the CDC. It is both unfortunate and inexcusable that absent any proof that Washington's current system is deficient, the CDC still insists the state adopt a name-retention HIV reporting system, or risk losing millions of dollars in federal aid. Such an outcome, while unwarranted, would only harm citizens of the state, an unacceptable result.

GACHA therefore supports the proposed Department of Health (DOH) changes to the Washington Administrative Code regarding HIV reporting and retention of names, with a proviso that the availability of anonymous testing be retained and DOH assure its ready availability state-wide. With that requirement, GACHA believes that a name retention HIV reporting system will not lead to a decline in HIV testing in the state. DOH should monitor this and report its findings in 12 months time.

GACHA further notes its confidence that tough Washington State laws and regulations are in place to protect the confidentiality of test results and prohibit discrimination based on HIV status. Residents of our state should be confident that breaches of confidentiality or discrimination are not and will not be tolerated.