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## EVERYBODY WINS WHEN THE RCSA SCORES

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BY  
ORIANA  
GREEN



## Public hearings will discuss HIV reporting policy

Critics say the proposal  
could cost lives

BY JONATHAN KIPP

**M**ore than two years have passed since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention directed the Oregon Health Division to report the names of all individuals testing positive for HIV.

In that time, the state agency has asked for public comment and has met with AIDS advocacy groups and service providers but still has not made an official change to the policy. The division recently announced three more hearings on a new proposal.

The plan before the community essentially would mirror the state's current AIDS reporting system, which includes using names. People diagnosed with AIDS have been reported since the beginning of the epidemic.

But identifying people with HIV by name, or even a unique identifier, remains controversial. Although epidemiologists say it helps them track the disease's spread, activists say any lack of confidentiality discourages testing.

The new hearings and the continued effort of the Oregon Health Division to consider reporting names of those testing positive angers Jack Cox, a spokesman for the HIV Advocacy Council of Oregon and Southwest Washington. "All communities have advised against it."

When the CDC announced the mandate in 1997, Cox says it scared everyone. He says he understands the science behind the proposal.

Cox is aware of the benefits that could come from tracking individuals with HIV—most significantly, providing the CDC more accurate information. But he says the sexually transmitted disease is unique.

"HIV is not chlamydia," Cox says. "The truth about AIDS is it's much more of a sociological disease than a biological one. There is still endless shame involved with it."

Because of that, Cox and others think people will fear their HIV status will be revealed. That will keep them from being tested, he says.

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