

<b>Subject:</b> Policy Statement: Life Threatening Illness	<b>Number:</b> 2 - 17
	<b>Date Issued:</b> December 1, 1998 <b>Date Revised:</b>
<b>Responsible Department:</b> DAS – Human Resources	<b>Approved:</b>

## Purpose

The City of Fresno recognizes that employees with life-threatening illnesses may wish to continue normal life activities, including work. The City also recognizes its responsibility to ensure that an applicant's or an employee's medical condition does not present a health or safety risk to other employees or the public.

The purpose of this policy statement is to ensure that applicants and employees with life-threatening illnesses including, but not limited to, cancer, heart disease, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS Related Complex (ARC), are treated in a fair, humane and non-discriminatory manner. This policy is also intended to protect the health and safety of the afflicted employee, co-workers and the public.

## Policy

After thoroughly considering the existing medical literature and legal obligations, the City of Fresno has adopted the following policy statements that apply to life-threatening illnesses including, but not limited to, cancer, heart disease, AIDS and ARC:

1. An employee may continue to work in his or her regularly assigned position for as long as the employee is able to meet reasonable performance standards.
2. To the extent that an employee's illness is considered a physical handicap, the City will reasonably accommodate the afflicted employee in a manner that is consistent with the business needs of the City. In such cases, the City reserves the right to require verification by a physician that the employee is able to perform the duties of his/her position and will not be a danger to himself/herself or others.
3. No employee with a life-threatening illness will be denied or restricted in the use of benefits, subject to any regulations or restrictions applicable to all employees regarding these benefits.
4. In the event that an ill employee is no longer able to perform the duties of his/her position, despite reasonable accommodation, the employee will be treated as any other disabled employee.
5. The City will not tolerate harassment of an employee with a life-threatening disease by any co-worker, supervisor, manager, or any other person employed by or under contract with the City of Fresno.

### **Employee Reactions and the Role of Education**

Frequently, a victim of a life-threatening illness must not only suffer the medical consequences of the disease but also the negative reactions of others in the workplace. Such reactions are often brought on by ignorance, misunderstanding and fear. The City of Fresno is particularly aware of the concerns, both warranted and unwarranted, regarding AIDS. AIDS is a life-threatening illness. All medical evidence, however, indicates that AIDS is **not** transmittable through casual contact nor through the normal activities that occur in the workplace. Managers and supervisors should be aware of their own and other employees' fears and misconceptions about specific life-threatening illnesses. These fears must be addressed if disruption and decreased productivity of city operations is to be avoided.

In order to encourage greater understanding and to reduce unnecessary fears of life-threatening illnesses, information and educational opportunities will be made available to all City employees.

### **Confidentiality**

The City recognizes that an individual's medical condition is a personal and private matter. It is City policy that information regarding an employee's health status shall be considered confidential and all reasonable precautions will be taken to protect that confidentiality. This policy applies to all medical information, regardless of whether received orally or in writing.