

U.S. to Admit Some Immigrants With AIDS Under New Health Policy

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Body

Bush Administration officials have decided to permit some immigrants with AIDS into the country while barring others, health officials said Thursday.

After two years of raucous debate, Federal health officials have reached a consensus about the policy they will establish on the immigration of people with AIDS.

Health officials said Thursday that while the policy has not yet been drafted, its intent is to allow people infected with AIDS to enter the country, provided they do not intend to seek permanent residence. The officials said that the Government would explicitly state that those with AIDS were not being excluded because of their disease. Rather, they said those with AIDS seeking permanent residence would be excluded solely because of cost considerations. Some officials said they believed that poor people with AIDS seeking to enter the country could become a burden to taxpayers.

Officials called this a compromise, because public health groups around the country have expressed outrage that AIDS would be listed as a disease for which a person could be excluded from the country, because the disease is not easily communicable.

But officials at the Justice Department, which administers immigration law through the Immigration and Naturalization Service, have continued to bar entry to this country of people infected with AIDS.

It is the Secretary of Health and Human Services who determines which diseases are put on the list of communicable diseases that are a public health threat if carried by immigrants. Health service officials have tried to eliminate AIDS from the list of diseases for which a person might be excluded.

The list currently includes only AIDS and infectious tuberculosis.

But the Justice Department administers the rules, and with support from other White House officials, it has been negotiating the matter with the staff of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis W. Sullivan.

The issue was first joined when Congress passed a law directing the Secretary to make AIDS infection a disease that could bar a person's entry into the country. This threatened to keep many in AIDS organizations from attending international AIDS meetings in the United States.

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The next international **AIDS** conference is scheduled to be held in Boston in 1992. **Under** the proposed **policy**, delegates who are infected would be permitted to enter the country.

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