

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

CII members come together to fight AIDS



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NEW DELHI

India Inc is fighting the battle against HIV/AIDS on all fronts. Companies are going the whole hog from pledging no discrimination against those affected while hiring and at the workplace, developing products and solutions for awareness to patient care and spreading awareness among workforce and beyond.

Almost 700-member companies of the industry chamber CII, including the Tata group companies, ITC, Pepsi, Ford and DCM Shriram Consolidated, have become signatories to its HIV/AIDS policy.

The policy mandates companies to provide a safe and healthy work environment, educate employees and their family about HIV/AIDS, allow an HIV-positive employee to work unless health conditions in-

terfere with work, keep information about employee's positive status confidential and exclude HIV/AIDS test in the pre-employment medical test.

Companies like Gujarat Ambuja Cement, HLL, Pepsi, Coca-Cola, SRF group, Bilt, Apollo Tyres, Crompton Greaves and Transport Corporation of India have also partnered the International Labour Organisation (ILO), whereby ILO trains employees on conducting awareness sessions at the workplace. This partnership now covers over 100 manufacturing plants across the country and over 1 lakh employees.

"CII has asked companies to contribute in HIV/AIDS control by using their core expertise. For example, Delhi-based ZMQ Software Systems has developed mobile games on AIDS awareness, while Score Technologies had developed a biometric card to carry the patient's medical history," said Shefali Chaturvedi, director, social development initiatives & healthcare, CII.

ZMQ, which has so far worked with Reliance Infocomm, is now in talks with Airtel and Tata Indicom to make its games available to their subscribers. It will launch its games in Africa next year and is working on mobile applications which will guide an affected person on nutrition, medical checkups and even show the complete blood count.

Companies are also educating the truckers about HIV/AIDS prevention, control and care at their factory premises and have also tied up with the state AIDS control societies for similar awareness sessions for truck drivers.

CII is now working on the issue of economic empowerment of positive people. "We are working with NGOs to look at alternative livelihood for these people and teaching them skills to support themselves," Ms Chaturvedi added.