

**For Immediate Release**  
January 21, 2003

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**AIDS LEGAL COUNCIL FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST AREA  
NURSING HOME FOR HIV DISCRIMINATION**

*Lexington of Chicago Ridge Nursing Home cited for denying admission to HIV+ man*

CHICAGO -- The AIDS Legal Council of Chicago filed a complaint today with the Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights on behalf of Mr. Richard Roe (not the client's real name) on the grounds that he was refused admission to Lexington of Chicago Ridge Nursing Home because of his HIV status.

The complaint alleges that on December 17, 2002, Mr. Roe's social worker contacted the director of admissions at Lexington of Chicago Ridge to arrange for Mr. Roe's transfer upon his release from Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Mr. Roe had been admitted to Northwestern to undergo testing for throat cancer.

However, when the director of admissions at Lexington learned of Mr. Roe's HIV-status, she immediately declined to admit him, citing staff inexperience in dealing with people with HIV. When Mr. Roe's social worker suggested some referrals to train Lexington staff, he was turned down again and informed that Lexington would not admit his patient because he was HIV-positive.

"It is hard to believe that this kind of discrimination continues to exist in the health care field after 20 years of the AIDS epidemic", said Ann Hilton Fisher, executive director of the AIDS Legal Council. "Other nursing home facilities routinely care for people with HIV, yet Lexington claims that it cannot accept our client despite the fact that it is licensed by the state of Illinois to provide skilled nursing home care. Lexington's claims are clearly based on prejudice."

Mr. Roe had originally requested to be placed at Lexington of Chicago Ridge because he has family in that area. He has since been admitted to another nursing home facility.

"By now, it should be clear to all health care providers in Illinois that discrimination against people with HIV is unlawful and that hiding behind excuses will not protect them from legal action," continued Fisher. "We hope to send a clear message to Lexington of Chicago Ridge and others who discriminate that this kind of conduct will not be tolerated."

The AIDS Legal Council of Chicago is the only area agency dedicated solely to providing no-cost legal help to low-income individuals with HIV and AIDS. Last year it assisted clients with more than 1,300 legal matters at its downtown location and its office at the CORE Center of Cook County Hospital.