

Settlement Lifts Restrictions on Group Home for People with HIV

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A resident outside the Gilsum, NH group home. Photo by Ken Williams, Concord Monitor

GLAD announced a settlement between its client, AIDS Services of Monadnock Region (ASMR) and the town of Gilsum, New Hampshire. The settlement will enable ASMR to operate a group home for people with HIV without many of the onerous restrictions previously imposed by the town, including restrictions on people with criminal convictions or histories of substance abuse.

The settlement came as the result of a [lawsuit filed by GLAD in Keene Superior Court in September 2008](#), which asserted that Gilsum illegally restricted the client population who could live in the house. “People with HIV can be harmed by unfounded fears of those with a history of substance abuse or a criminal record.

This case was about challenging those fears,” said Bennett Klein, GLAD’s AIDS Law Project Director. “We’re pleased that the Cleve Jones Wellness House can now fulfill its important mission of providing a stable home and supportive services to people living with HIV and Hepatitis C.”

One of the restrictions successfully challenged allowed only residents who were sober for a year before entering the house. The settlement will allow people in the home who have three months of self-reported sobriety, have successfully completed a licensed drug or alcohol treatment program, or have been on probation or parole and drug- and alcohol-free for at least 30 days.

In addition, the settlement eliminates a prohibition on residents who have been out of prison for less than one year, permitting people on probation and parole to live in the house immediately upon release from prison. The settlement must be approved by Gilsum’s planning and zoning boards.

Susan MacNeil, board member and interim executive director of ASMR said, “We’re delighted this matter has been settled and we can focus on the business of providing our residents the support and monitoring they need to make healthy choices, move forward in their lives, and contribute to society.”

Stephen Bragdon of Bragdon & Berkson, PC of Keene co-counseled the case with GLAD. Elliot Berry of New Hampshire Legal Assistance was counsel for ASMR in a companion case.

AIDS Services for the Monadnock Region, founded in 1989, is a non-profit organization committed to serving people with HIV/AIDS in Cheshire County, southern Sullivan County, and western Hillsborough County. ASMR offers case management, free, anonymous HIV testing in a confidential setting, educational programs, HIV+ speakers, and 200+ volumes in its lending library.

In the News:

Keene Sentinel [Gilsum, AIDS Services Reach Deal](#)

Background

[Suit Seeks to End Illegal Restrictions on NH Group Home](#) (press release)