

Russia's State Duma Supports Mandatory HIV Testing Before Marriage

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The head of the Federal AIDS Center, Vadim Pokrovsky, said he supported the idea, but only if the testing was carried out on a voluntary basis.

The State Duma's health care committee sided on Wednesday with a suggestion to impose mandatory HIV testing on couples who want to get married, news agency Interfax reported.

"It's a reasonable proposal and should be supported. The number of HIV-positive people is growing and it is becoming a serious problem. I think our top public health official [Anna Popova, who suggested the move] is absolutely right," Nikolai Gerasimenko, first deputy chairman of the committee, told Interfax on Wednesday.

Popova, the head of health care watchdog Rospotrebnadzor, proposed the idea on Tuesday at a youth forum titled *Territoriya Smyslov na Klyazme* and known in English as *Terra Scientia*, Interfax reported. She also said she would support genetic testing and hepatitis testing for couples who plan to have a baby.

The head of the Federal AIDS Center, Vadim Pokrovsky, said he supported the idea, but only if

the testing was carried out on a voluntary basis.

“Mandatory testing might cause serious problems. For example, who should be informed of the results? The future wife, the bride [if her fiancé was tested]? How would she react? Most likely the marriage would fall apart,” he told the Business FM radio station Tuesday.

“What is going to happen to this bride or groom whose test was positive? The processes that are going to take place next should be seriously thought over,” Pokrovsky added.

According to the center's prognosis, the number of recorded cases of HIV in Russia is set to exceed 1 million by the end of this year.

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