

Public Affairs Section

U.S. Embassy, Gaborone, Botswana

May 29, 2012

(#10/12)



Press Release

Monitor Article and Mmegi Editorial Are WRONG: HIV Status Does NOT Affect U.S. Visa Issuance

The Monitor / Mmegi Newspapers recently published an article and a subsequent editorial that were wholly – and disturbingly – inaccurate. Contrary to the article and editorial, HIV infection does not make an applicant ineligible for a visa to the United States, and there is no HIV test required for visa applicants. This is true for citizens of Botswana, just as it is true for all applicants.

Effective January 4, 2010, HIV Infection was removed from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) List of Communicable Diseases of Public Health Significance. Therefore, HIV infection is not a disqualifying factor when foreign citizens apply for a visa to travel to the United States. Additionally, while applicants who want to emigrate to the U.S. are required to have medical examinations, HIV testing is not part of any examination for visa purposes.

The Embassy takes seriously any claim that the United States stigmatizes or discriminates based on HIV status – nothing is further from the truth. The United States' commitment to helping Botswana meet its health challenges is firm and our focus on ensuring that the future remains bright for all Botswana citizens – particularly with regard to opportunities in the U.S. – is unwavering. The U.S. Embassy values its relationship with all media outlets in Botswana, but when a mistake of this magnitude occurs, we must seek its correction. In this case, we have requested a prominent and a prompt correction from Monitor / Mmegi Newspapers.

For further details, please contact: Public Affairs Officer, John Warner (395-3982 ext. 2468), Laona Segatsho, Information Specialist (395-3982 ext. 2419, fax: 390-6129, SegatshoLJ@state.gov) or Angelinah Matenanga, Public Affairs Secretary, (395-3982 ext. 2415, fax: 390-6129, MatenangaAB@state.gov).