

IBM: No genetic tests for hiring, benefits

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The IBM Corp. in Armonk, N.Y., reportedly plans to pledge not to use genetic information in hiring or determining eligibility for healthcare plans.

The New York Times said genetics policy specialists and privacy rights groups say the move by the world's largest technology company by revenue is the first by a major corporation.

The policy, which will cover IBM's 300,000 workers, comes as Congress considers legislation on genetic privacy, the Times reported.

Surveys have indicates people in the United States worry genetic testing or profiling might be used to prevent some people from obtaining jobs and health insurance.

"What IBM is doing is significant because you have a big, leadership company that is saying to its workers, 'We aren't going to use genetic testing against you,' " Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School told the Times. "If you want a genomic revolution, then you better have policies, practices and safeguards that give people comfort and trust."

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