

further provided that “objective evidence” must be used to determine “the probability that the potential injury will actually occur and whether reasonable modification of policies will mitigate risk.” The dental graduate planned to appeal her denial.

One of the acknowledged risks of genetic testing was the potentially damaging psychological impact it could have on individuals susceptible to an inherited debilitating illness as well as to their families. Deep depression and anger were common emotions for those individuals; the flip side, should the person not be at risk, was guilt. Nonetheless, the emotional and psychological fallout of genetic testing was well known in medical circles.

Airlines Under Pressure

Since 1978, when the federal government had deregulated the airline industry to encourage competition, it had been the survival of the fittest, with many carriers going out of business and declaring bankruptcy. Some such as Continental had survived bankruptcy, but others (TWA) had ceased doing business. Many airlines survived by maintaining service while slashing costs, negotiating tough new contracts with employees, and limiting wage increases, health benefits, and work rule demands. Many carriers reduced the cost of their insurance by maintaining strict safety standards and good safety records. Nonetheless, in the post-9/11 and post-2000 Internet bubble era, airlines were struggling again. There were fewer passengers and the competition from low-fare carriers such as Southwest further increased the financial pressure. The year 2002 had seen the bankruptcies of two prominent airlines, U.S. Airways and United, and the near-bankruptcy of American Airlines. The airline industry’s losses for that year were expected to exceed \$9 billion.

The Investigation

In an effort to determine what recommendation to make, Julie Taylor had—without using Reiger’s name—interviewed a number of key players, both within and outside of Danville. She had started with Steve Hillman, the Danville medical administrator, who had this feedback:

This pilot with Huntington’s disease could make the company’s medical insurance unaffordable, with premiums that would take a severe bite out of our profits. He could need 24/7 care for 30 years. I’m advising genetic screenings for all new employees. We won’t get stuck with this sort of expense if we never hire these people.

Chris Bowman, public relations manager for Danville:

This is a tough one. On the one hand, the flying public will panic if they even suspect that we employ a pilot with a neurological disorder—okay, a potential neurological disorder. You know what the public hears when you say potential