Editor’s Letter

Oh Yes, He Did

May 6, 2010 By Regan Hofmann

On March 23, President Barack Obama signed into law the historic $940 billion Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, thus reforming U.S. health care as we know it and proving that he, and the Democrats, are capable of effecting some serious change in the way Americans live. Or, more specifically, how we stay alive.

As a result of this bill, 32 million more Americans will be able to seek care and treatment. Those of us with pre-existing conditions will be guaranteed coverage. And eventually, waiting periods of up to a year will be a thing of the past—great news considering the wait can prove deadly for someone newly diagnosed with AIDS.

The bill is far from perfect. It fails to address the needs of the AIDS Drug Assistance Program; it left out the Early Treatment for HIV Act and does not provide a public option. Much of what it offers won’t take effect until 2014, which is too late for some of us in need. But there is hope. Especially for thousands of people living with HIV who know their status and currently aren’t on treatment. Expanded access to health care may encourage them to connect to care. Plus, the promise of universal health care with no exclusions may lead more people to get tested for HIV. This comes just in time for June 27, National HIV Testing Day—a great time to remind your friends and family to know their HIV status.

On page 44 (“Health Care Reform Checkup”) we highlight the critical aspects of how the healh care reform bill can improve—and perhaps prolong—our lives.

Our other big story this month (“Pawsitivity”) also focuses on health—exploring the health benefits of pets. In a recent *POZ* survey, 86 percent of you said having pets benefited your health and well-being “very much/a great deal.” Why? Because they provide unconditional love, make you feel needed, and help you relax and relieve stress. Forty-seven percent said your pet gives you something to live for.

For the nearly 14 years I have been fighting HIV, I have leaned heavily on the solace and love of the many species that have graced my life. When I worried I would be dropped from my health care and have to face financial ruin in an attempt to pay for my meds, I cried away my fears into many a furry face.

The recent change in health care may mean those days are over. But, as we all know, the various types of mental anguish that can result from trying to survive HIV can't entirely be fixed by a piece of legislation, or even, sometimes, a fluffy friend. Which is partly why we launched a new website that will hopefully do for people dealing with mental health issues what *POZ* has done for people with HIV. Please check it out at smartandstrong.com. Even if your mind is in great shape, you can learn how to keep it that way.

President Obama's battle cry was "Yes, We Can." He has taken the first steps toward improving our nation's health. Time and further legislation will shape the details and impact of the bill. It will be years before we know the true cost, and the true value, of "Obamacare."

But for this woman fighting a deadly, expensive disease, I'm glad Obama got it done. If nothing else, he has eased my fears of dying due to lack of health care. And my cats are relieved that I will be crying less into their fur….

Regan Hofmann
Editor in Chief
Email: editor-in-chief@poz.com

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Editors-letter-JUNE2010-18355-3026