Take Good Care

August 13, 2012 By Cristina Gonzalez

One out of every five Americans living with HIV don't know their status, and for all who do, being diagnosed is merely the first step on the long road to leading a healthy life. As our April/May POZ Survey documented, many people get diagnosed outside of an HIV-focused health care setting, which in turn means they often don't get the kind of linkage to care required for optimal health. We asked about when you were diagnosed with HIV and what you did next. Here are your responses.

Where did you get tested for HIV?

- 16% Anonymous/confidential HIV testing site
- 7% AIDS Service Organization (ASO)
- 23% Community–Based Health Clinic
- 16% Emergency Room/Hospital
- 23% General Practitioner
- 1% Mobile HIV Testing Van
- 1% Ob/Gyn
- 12% Other

How often did you visit your primary care physician before you tested positive?

- 27% Once a year
- 23% Several times a year
- 22% Every couple of years
- 28% Never

48 percent of you received counseling before and after your HIV test.

52 percent of you did not.

79 percent of you found HIV counseling helpful and informative.
21 percent of you did not.

67 percent of you got info on how to connect with an HIV specialist or other health care provider.
33 percent of you did not.

48 percent of you had someone follow up to make sure you saw an HIV specialist or health care provider.
52 percent of you did not.

5 reasons you waited more than a month to visit an HIV specialist:

1. I felt ashamed or embarrassed about having HIV
2. I didn't know whom to see for HIV care
3. I didn't feel sick
4. I didn't have health insurance / treatment was too expensive
5. I didn't want to take medication

How soon after taking an HIV test did you find out you were positive?

- 8% Within the hour
- 5% Same day
- 29% 1-7 days later
- 44% 1-2 weeks later
- 14% More than 2 weeks later

How soon after testing positive did you see an HIV specialist or other health care provider?

- 57% 0-1 months
- 20% 2-5 months
- 8% 6-9 months
- 2% 10-12 months
- 13% More than a year

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