Letters—October/November 2011

October 10, 2011

Girl Power

In "Sisters Act" (July/August 2011), three African-American New Jersey women—Dottie Rains, Michelle Braxton and Minister Jae Quinlan—shared their inspiring stories and discussed the misconception that HIV is exclusively a "man's disease." Their home state has the highest proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS who are women, mostly women of color.

I was so thrilled to see my friend Dottie Rains on the cover of *POZ*. I have known her for many years—what a wonderful person and role model. New Jersey's problems with HIV are distinctive: We are fifth nationwide in the number of people infected with HIV, but first in the number of women infected with HIV. Your bringing our unique view of the virus to light will make it easier for those of us going into the community to do education and prevention work. It will also encourage women to seek out testing and, if needed, treatment. As a longtime reader of *POZ*, I thank you again for the wonderful article.

MaryLou Freund
Trenton, NJ

Protecting Porn Stars

The POZ Web Exclusive "Porn, Patient Zeta and HIV" interviewed adult film star Derrick Burts, a.k.a. Patient Zeta, who tested HIV positive in October. He used the resulting publicity to advocate for condom use in all adult films—both straight or gay.

Requiring condoms will only put porn actors out of work and shift the shooting out of the United States to Eastern Europe, where they don't seem to care.

Jay Stephens
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Maybe it's time to seriously look at antiretroviral meds [in the form of PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis] for all participating in "risky sex"—and time for an increased effort to advance research into microbicides. If condoms aren't going to work or be used, there are other options. Where is the scientific community's commitment to solving this problem? It is not just in the porn industry, but among all of us who have multiple sex partners. Don't judge—just solve the problem

creatively with the resources that we have!

Rob
Albany, NY

It’s great that this has come to light and [Derrick Burts] is going to become a spokesperson. However, people in that industry know the risks—[unprotected] sex with that many partners is never fully safe. Add to that the escorting [that many porn actors do on the side] and the level of risk skyrockets. HIV isn’t anything new in 2011. When one enters the porn industry, accepting the risks is part of the program. After all, condoms aren’t foolproof. If you don’t want the risk, stay out of porn.

Name withheld
Raleigh, NC

International Enlistment
In “Volunteer Mission” (July/August 2011), Carlton Rounds, the executive director and founder of Volunteer Positive, discussed the first-of-its-kind nonprofit that helps Americans living with and affected by HIV to volunteer at AIDS service organizations abroad.

This is a great opportunity for HIV-positive men and women. I volunteered at an orphanage in Buenos Aires, Argentina, five years ago and worked with kids who were affected by and infected with HIV. It was a life-changing experience, one I will never forget. There is a lot of healing power in reaching out and helping others who are in the same situation as you. It makes you feel stronger! Keep up this good work!

Jon
Long Beach, CA

It is all well and good to help people in other countries, but there are people right here at home in the United States who need help. Case in point: AIDS Resources of Rural Texas serves [a 26-county area in north-central Texas] and is shutting down because of bureaucratic bull. The clients of its clinics are losing case management, health care and prescription services. Where is the help for those of us living with HIV in rural Texas?

Don
City Withheld

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