Letters—September 2012

August 13, 2012

Sero-Prosecutions

In "Criminal Injustice" (June 2012), three people who faced serious, HIV-related criminal prosecution discussed the impact of HIV-specific laws and how they backfire as protective measures.

A big thank you to all of you for the courage to tell your story and to make a positive outcome of it. I am also positive, and the fear of [HIV] criminalization charges has kept me out of relationships, even platonic ones. You all are an inspiration for me to include criminalization in the speeches I give to community groups about preventing and living with HIV.

Laura
Des Moines, Iowa

I completely understand the absolute terror that strikes when [you are] first diagnosed and when you have to share [your] status with potential partners. However, I could never in good conscience have sex without disclosing. I filed charges against the partner who transmitted HIV to me. Five years later, he is in jail on charges of failing to disclose and not using protection. I know of three other women who were infected by him. This is why HIV criminalization laws exist.

Renee Meyers
Niceville, FL

After reading this, I am more concerned about how some people are in the closet with HIV. I tell those that I want a relationship with that I am HIV positive. I do this not because I have to; I do it because I am part of everything around me. I don't want to hide from sight so I can be overlooked or forgotten. I want to be counted to let others know we exist right by them.

Richard B.
Salamanca, Spain

I would urge every HIV-infected person to think very carefully about their interactions, whether they are [online or face-to-face]. The authorities who handle these cases or alleged crimes are not

like you and me. They also may have endless money and endless time to go after you. Where are the attorneys to help? Where are the people to act up? Being involved in an alleged or real case can be very lonely and isolating. Please be careful as I wouldn't want you to be where I have been.

Randall
Portland, OR

The Recruits
The article "The POZ Army: How We End AIDS Together" (June 2012) launched the POZ Army, a global grassroots collective of people fighting for the cure for AIDS and treatment for all until a cure is found. For more information, visit pozarmy.com.

I am a soldier in the POZ Army. I hope my friends join regardless of their serostatus. We need a strong and powerful force to make a resounding statement to the politicians, drug companies, researchers and every citizen in the world.
John S.
Location Withheld

I am a 17-year survivor of AIDS, and I wouldn't be here if it weren't for people who fought [to find the effective treatment that I take today]. Now it's my turn to stand up for those who can't.

Mark J.
Location Withheld

OK, all you AIDS activists out there: This is the time for all good men (and women) to come to the aid of our country [and the community of] people with AIDS. Please join me in signing up for the POZ Army so we can fight for AIDS funding in order to continue treatment and to find the cure. [HIV can] happen to anyone. I know because I have participated in thousands of intakes of HIV-positive clients, and believe me: HIV does not discriminate! This is a great opportunity.

Priscilla
Location Withheld

I have been hearing for years now that we are making great strides in the treatment of HIV/AIDS and a vaccine. I have been screaming for years: "What about a cure? Why is no one focused on a cure?" Well it looks like there is finally a serious push for the cure. What a great idea!

J. Cara
Location Withheld

A Queen's Apology

In the POZ Blog "Donna Summer's Letter to ACT UP" (June 12, 2012), following the death of Donna Summer, AIDSmeds founder and advisory editor Peter Staley unearthed a 1989 letter in which the Queen of Disco denied the rumors that she had made antigay comments relating to the AIDS epidemic. She also apologized to her fans for the pain the alleged comments had caused.

I wasn't there, so I don't know what was said by Donna Summer or the men she was speaking with who then reported her alleged antigay remarks. But I will say this: Her letter seems sincere.

Gigi
Location Withheld

I never believed the hateful comments that were attributed to her. And I believe her when she said that she did not make them. Many gay people have been traumatized by the church and by people who call themselves Christians. When Donna Summer became a born-again Christian, it was natural for some of her gay fans to misinterpret this as rejection, especially at the height of the AIDS crisis in this country. Summer was a wonderful, gifted singer and entertainer whose music brought me a lot of happiness. I choose to remember her that way.

David Salyer
Atlanta

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Letters-SEPT-2012-22799-6671