AIDS Is Not an “Automatic Death Sentence”

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The law has finally started to catch up with the science—in Canada, at least. While ruling on a case in which a defendant was tried for knowingly transmitting HIV, Ontario Court Justice David Wake dismissed the four charges of attempted murder, because AIDS is not an “automatic death sentence” and treatment has advanced to the point that death is not an “inevitable consequence or even a probable consequence” of HIV for those on treatment with undetectable viral loads. While this is a step forward in the arena of HIV criminalization, one Canadian judge can’t rule on every case. HIV-positive individuals have been arrested or brought to court for HIV-related “crimes” in more than 30 states, even after the White House announced such laws have no basis in science and, in fact, undermine public health goals. The jury is still out on how American courts will react, but here’s hoping justice prevails.

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