Tune In to WHIV Radio

November 10, 2014 By Trent Straube

MarkAlain Dery, top left, exhibits HIV tests during the HIV Awareness Music Project (HAMP) in New Orleans. WIth him are (clockwise from top): bounce rap group Vockah Redu and the Crew, Miss P.'s Birthday Cake puppet, and jazz singer Meschiya Lake.

Something's in the air in southern Louisiana—radio station WHIV 102.3 FM. Launching on World AIDS Day, the station is officially named Radio NOLA HIV: Programming Dedicated to Human Rights and Social Justice. The New Orleans–based station is the brainchild of MarkAlain Dery, DO, MPH, an infectious disease specialist at Tulane University who also runs a Ryan White clinic and spearheads several HIV awareness events. "I named the station WHIV because of the stigma surrounding HIV that I see daily in my practice," he says. "How does one de-stigmatize HIV? Say the word over and over again."

The station's programming—scheduled as music at night and talk radio during the day—will be broader than just HIV. "We intend to give a voice to all those who otherwise do not have a voice in the community," Dery says, listing transgender people and undocumented workers as examples. "And we'll talk about sexual health—we live in a state that supports abstinence only—I want people to talk about ways to protect themselves."

Dery views the radio station as a content delivery system. "Yes, we are going to broadcast over

traditional airwaves," he says, "but we're also going to podcast and archive our original stuff, and we'll stream on the Internet and mobile devices." This way, listeners don't have to miss a word—even if they're not in NOLA.

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