#ACApositive Campaign Sounds the Alarm on Trans Health Care Issues

It arrives as Trump promises to reverse an Obama-era rule that expanded health care access to transgender people.

May 3, 2018 By Trent Straube

Are you #ACApositive? That's the question posed by a digital campaign from the Transgender Law Center's Positively Trans project that aims to start a conversation about health care, transgender people and the Affordable Care Act (ACA, or Obamacare).

The campaign arrives as the Trump administration, according to The New York Times, said it plans to cut back on an Obama-era rule that prevents discrimination against transgender people with regard to health care and insurance.

The topic is particularly relevant to HIV/ AIDS because transgender people, notably trans women of color, are at high risk for the virus.

The Transgender Law Center's #ACApositive campaign features the stories and viewpoints of transgender people, and it highlights related data, such as:

- 41 percent of trans people living with HIV have gone six months or more without medical care at some point since their diagnosis;

- 44 percent of trans people living with HIV surveyed by Positively Trans had faced discrimination in health care because of their gender identity.

Our #ACAPositive Campaign is here! “Whether one is transgender or not, we all deserve to be uplifted, supported, affirmed, and accepted as part of the complex tapestry called humanity. Trans people living with HIV are speaking out about our experiences with health care, and it’s time for our country to hear us.” -- Kiara St. James.

A post shared by Transgender Law Center (@translawcenter) on Apr 30, 2018 at 10:54am PDT

The #ACApositive campaign also includes a Twitter town hall at 11 a.m. PT/2 p.m. ET, Monday, May 7.

“By undermining the Affordable Care Act, the Trump administration is undermining the survival of transgender people of color living with HIV,” said Cecilia Chung, senior director of strategic projects at the Transgender Law Center and founder of Positively Trans, in a press release about the campaign. “Yet so few advocates, policymakers, or media outlets covering these attacks on health care are talking about the stakes for my community. By saying we are #ACApositive, transgender people living with HIV are demanding that our voices and experiences be heard and respected.”

“We are launching the #ACApositive campaign because everyone should be able to get medical care when they need it,” added Evonne Kaho, another member of Positively Trans. Everyone deserves for their life to be saved, and that’s what the Affordable Care Act means for transgender people living with HIV. It’s a matter of life or death for us.”

“We are now living in a medically advanced world where, with proper treatment, HIV has become

a manageable, chronic condition and not a death sentence—unless you are poor, unless you are a person of color, and especially unless you're a poor transgender person of color," said Arianna Lint, a member of the Positively Trans National Advisory Board, in the press release. "For us, it is 1980. The Affordable Care Act has been a critical step toward finally addressing this crisis and giving us a chance to thrive. To turn back on it now would be cruel and, for many, fatal."

In related news, Kiara St. James, the executive director of the New York Transgender Advocacy Group, penned a commentary in The Advocate titled "Fight Back Against the Assault on Trans Health."

For more POZ articles about HIV and the transgender community, click #Transgender. And read our recent cover story "Trans Lives Matter: Fighting Erasure and HIV."

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