How the HIV Community Responded to Charlie Sheen's Disclosure

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Rae Lewis-Thornton and Mark S. King talk HIV with Ali Nejad on 'The Daily Share.'

Now that actor Charlie Sheen has revealed he is HIV positive, the media has been flooded with commentary on the announcement. Below is a roundup of highlights from many leaders in the HIV community. Most offered support and used the topic as a teachable moment to discus HIV criminalization, sex workers, stigma and much more.

Appearing on Headline News, advocates Rae Lewis-Thornton and Mark S. King—both are POZ bloggers—spoke with *The Daily Share*'s Ali Nejad about living with HIV for decades. They touched on the differences between HIV and AIDS and they stressed, as Sheen's doctor did, that stigma, depression and addiction can be a larger threat than HIV.

In a Huffington Post article titled "Charlie Sheen, HIV Stigma and Why the Media Panic Is Ugly," activist and author Michelangelo Signorile points out: "The fact that Sheen felt he had to hide his status, spending millions of dollars to do so, is a testament to the stigma around HIV, which includes moral judgments about sexual behavior."

POZ blogger and HIV educator Shawn Decker penned an opinion piece for Entertainment Tonight titled "Charlie Sheen Doesn't Deserve HIV Any More Than I Did at Age 11." Decker, who has hemophilia, writes:

> I just hope that some actual facts can be inserted into this story—about the state of HIV treatment, and that those with HIV are less infectious if they are on consistent and effective treatment, which is why HIV testing is important for everyone. And most importantly,

people with HIV can and do have healthy relationships.

We go to the movies to escape reality but when I hear that people still think that HIV can be transmitted through sharing a bottle of water, I sometimes wonder if I’m at the opening weekend of Young Guns, stuck back in 1988. These days, real information can be shared quickly and effectively—but so can judgment and condemnation.

The New Jersey AIDS Walk posted the following on Instagram:

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/community-response-sheen-28063-6551