# Editor’s Letter

## Smells Like Team Spirit

November 1, 2009 By Regan Hofmann

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One of the greatest parts of being the editor of *POZ* is the access it gives me to the people who determine AIDS policy.

I know I can’t single-handedly sway any lawmaker to be more compassionate or to vote, say, for unrestricted needle exchange programs, but speaking my piece feels much better than merely complaining about what’s not getting done—or not getting done fast enough. Working with others to change how the world treats and sees people living with HIV energizes me.

AIDS advocacy was at its strongest in the beginning of the pandemic when the crisis was new and the straits most dire. Today, there is less urgency and awareness and more complacency around the issue of HIV/AIDS in America both inside our government (with some notable exceptions) and throughout the general public. Meanwhile, many continue to become infected—and die.

Given the diversity of the modern HIV community, and the fact that we’re spread all over the United States, the collective impact of our work is not as easily visible as it was when thousands, for example, marched together on the Mall in Washington, DC, or stood together in the streets of the Bay Area.

Which is why we created the POZ Advocacy hub on POZ.com (read about it here). By connecting everyone doing advocacy work across the United States with each other, we hope to create a portal—and a platform—for the change we need.

Many great leaders need our voices, our stories and our support to do their good work better. And the leaders on HIV/AIDS issues in the federal government want to know how they can best develop an effective national AIDS strategy. The POZ Advocacy hub gives you an easy way to hear their opinions and to share yours. We launch this new hub in the spirit of trying to unite all those who work to end AIDS.

Now, I need a favor. I need each and every one of you to go to poz.com/advocacy and add a comment in the “National AIDS Strategy” section explaining what would best help the community of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. If you don’t have a computer, please mail your thoughts to us.

Jeffrey Crowley, director of the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP), is planning to host town halls in nine more cities. Crowley will relay what he hears at those meetings to the group developing the national AIDS strategy—and to President Obama himself. But due to the time constraints of each meeting, only a limited number of people will be able to speak. More than 750,000 Americans know they are HIV positive—imagine the impact if each and every one of you voiced your fears and concerns—even if you did so anonymously! We'll take your results to Crowley so that he can hear from a wider swath of our community.

I was in the gallery when President Obama gave his address on health care reform on September 10. I watched members of Congress hoot and holler, as our commander in chief spoke of how he wants to provide all Americans with access to health care. Politics is always a complicated business, and it won't be easy to pass health care reform. But if we all stand together and hoot and holler loud enough, it will be that much harder for those on the Hill to ignore our needs. Obama's waiting to hear from us.

Smells like a moment for team spirit to me.

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