Letters—June 2014

May 9, 2014

Girl Power

"Empowering Entrepreneurs" (March 2014) featured the work and the women of Common Threads. The small-group training session designed to help HIV-positive women face their diagnoses has evolved to include a microenterprise marketplace.

This is a wonderful, inspiring and encouraging story. Each woman has inspired me to know that I can and will be a part of something outside of myself. I can help another woman know that she is not alone, and through encouragement I can help her realize her potential to lead the way for other women experiencing the negative issues we face living with the virus. Thank you for all you have done for me through your stories.

Fenicia Rosario,
Greenville

This is an exemplary piece that makes me feel connected. I am based in Kenya, and your message to women elates my spirit and makes me feel that I am not alone. It would be my pleasure to make a connection with you as we also have a network of women living with HIV and it would be advantageous to get to know you.

Margaret Birir,
Eldoret, Kenya

It's great that someone with long-term AIDS can become an entrepreneur. I think about all the people who were stopped by AIDS at the height of their career. How can some of us return to our businesses when we have lost a decade? All we need is a hand up—not a handout. We lost so many creative people to AIDS, and we are losing more creative people each day as we are not finished with our work, but we need someone to believe in us. There are so many smart people out there. Don't lose us. Help us.

Joe Monroe,
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Getting Covered

The article "Louisiana Insurer Rejects Ryan White Funds for ACA Premiums" (February 10, 2014) reported the news that Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) of Louisiana will no longer accept third-party payments for its premiums. Lambda Legal has since filed a lawsuit against BCBS and two other Louisiana health insurers.

Let's be adults. Insurance companies including BCBS want us to die. They make no money from our premiums whoever pays them. We will have to be very aggressive to stay alive throughout this. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is about the worst thing that could have happened to those of us with HIV/AIDS.

Richard, Chicago

At the end of the day, this just seems plain stupid. BCBS wants your insurance premium money, but not if it comes from Ryan White Funding. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has clarified its position, and now BCBS is being intransigent. I wonder what kind of medical legalese it'll come up with to refuse more expensive treatments needed if people get sick from this childish tug-of-war?

Jery, Sioux Falls

Wow…I have been positive for 18 years, and it is hard to believe that things have gotten worse instead of better. The ACA has done nothing so far but triple my premium and reduce my coverage over the last three years. I was really hoping things would get better.

Jim, La Crosse

It is a shame that BCBS has decided not to accept Ryan White Funds to help pay the premiums of those with HIV in Louisiana. This could start a trend by BCBS in other states. We must do something about this now.

Michael, Haslett

In my opinion, the insurance companies in Louisiana are taking any position they can find to not insure high-cost illnesses. In this case, they have chosen the most vulnerable people in a state where they will suffer little to no community backlash.

Andrew, Atlanta

This frightens me to no end. I am so disappointed in political people for denying Medicaid expansion in Republican states. Why? Just to prove a point.

Derek Brown, Lafayette

Fighting Ourselves

In his blog post "Gay-on-Gay Shaming: The New HIV War" (March 1, 2014), AIDSmeds founder and longtime activist Peter Staley calls out the HIV-related stigma happening in the gay community. Turn to page 23 to read an excerpt.

The move to mobilize our communities should also include a celebration of those learning to live, love and raise each other up regardless of HIV status. Your article reminds me that we have much work to do, but our contribution in this century will be memorable for all times.

Alfonso Carlon

I'm a long-term survivor, and it sickens me to watch what's happening in our community. Where is the love and support we used to show one another? And more importantly, how can we get it back?

TommyJ

I think the author did an exemplary job describing the theme of gay-on-gay stigma. But I think it may be useful to remember stigma continues to exist in many other aspects of our world.

Andrew

After having been left at a restaurant, on the dance floor and twice in my own apartment after disclosing—despite my good looks and great sense of humor—I decided that serosorting is the only option. Why did the Minotaur live in the labyrinth? To keep himself away from the rest of the world.

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