



Love is the Drug

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June 23, 2025 By [Trent Straube](#)

I never got any of my HIV medications at New York City's Village Apothecary, an independent pharmacy in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. But I remember always feeling welcome whenever I did stop in for this or that.

As a gay New Yorker, as well as someone who during the late 1980s into the '90s went to college in Greenwich Village and lived in the East Village, I knew very well just how special Village Apothecary was to those of us living with HIV. Since 1983, the pharmacy has been at the forefront of caring for those with the virus. From the start, the staff has loved the clients, and the feeling is mutual.

That connection was uncommon back then, and it's even more so today. Pharmacy chain stores and mail-order pharmacies have made the personal touch a rarity. For folks with HIV, especially in the early days of AIDS, their lives often literally depended on the caring staff at independent pharmacies like Village Apothecary.

The challenges may be different now, but people aging with HIV undoubtedly still benefit from the personal touch. Please [go here](#) to find out why many long-term survivors say they'll never go to any pharmacy other than Village Apothecary.

In this special issue of POZ focusing on HIV treatment, we spotlight the role that such care plays in the well-being of folks with the virus. We also take a look at what's in the pipeline for HIV treatment. Researchers are working on longer-acting therapies to treat the virus. [Go here](#) for more.

Long-term survivors receive care from many health professionals, but perhaps the most direct connection is with their primary care providers. POZ contributing writer Shawn Decker has had a supportive relationship with his physician since 1999. Recently, he had to say so long to his doctor,

who retired from practice earlier this year. [Go here](#) to read Shawn's moving tribute.

Food is another component of proper care. Eating well can often make the difference between just surviving and really thriving. Sue Daugherty knows that to be true. She's CEO of the Philadelphia-based MANNA, a nonprofit that feeds chronically ill people. The group has grown from serving only people with HIV to feeding those in need across the region. [Go here](#) for more.

Mary Fisher, our cover subject, is most definitely someone who knows about the importance of substantive care in making HIV treatment effective for a lifetime. She tested positive for the virus in 1991. The following year, she took to the stage at the Republican National Convention to ask her fellow Republicans and Americans to "set aside prejudice and politics to make room for compassion and sound policy" regarding HIV and AIDS.

Mary was the fourth person to grace the cover of POZ in 1994. She has been an activist ever since. In a new memoir, *Uneasy Silence*, the mother and artist speaks truth to power and shares wisdom from her decades of HIV advocacy. [Go here](#) to read an excerpt.

Lastly, please [go here](#) for our 2025 HIV drug chart. The quick-reference chart lists current treatment options.