Maybe This Time

In this special issue dedicated to Latinos, our cover story focuses on the experiences of Latinos with HIV.

October 4, 2021 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I came out as gay to my parents and my sister 25 years ago. By then I had been living with HIV for four years, but I did not disclose my status to them until 2008. It took me a long while to accept being gay before I told them my orientation. It makes sense to me now that it took another long while to tell them about the virus.

It didn't make much sense to me back then. Or rather, my choice not to tell them about having HIV wasn't about it making sense or not. I decided not to tell them out of practical concerns. Having been raised Roman Catholic, I figured my Latino family was going to have a difficult enough time accepting me as a gay. And I believed that I would be dead soon, so it didn't matter.

I wrote about this journey when I first joined the POZ staff in an article titled "Coming Out Again." Over the years, I have had many people tell me how much they related to my story. I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to share it, but I am especially thankful to the folks who were kind enough to give me that feedback. I'd call that the best kind of win-win situation.

Our stories matter. That's true for all of us. However, in this special issue dedicated to Latinos, our cover story is focusing that lens on the experiences of Latinos with HIV. Click here to read stories of three Latinos with the virus, including activist and POZ contributing writer Charles Sanchez.

As important as it is to uplift those of us living with HIV, we should also applaud the efforts of our allies who are HIV negative. The HIV movement would be much diminished without their efforts. We spotlight two of them: Guillermo Chacón, president and CEO of the Latino Commission on AIDS (LCOA), and Miss Universe Andrea Meza.

Guillermo has led LCOA since 2010. In addition to not living with HIV, he is also heterosexual. Nonetheless, his predecessor, the late Dennis deLeon, brought him into the fold. Guillermo had done some HIV work before joining LCOA, but it was his experiences working with Dennis and the HIV community at large that prepared him to lead LCOA. Click here to read more.

Andrea is also not living with HIV and is heterosexual, but she makes it clear to all that she is no prude when it comes to being an ally to LGBTQs and people who have the virus. As the current Miss Universe, she uses her celebrity to raise HIV awareness. POZ caught up with her in New York

City when she was touring LCOA and other HIV groups. Click here to read more about her HIV advocacy.

In addition to HIV, Andrea is also passionate about general health and fitness. Those topics seem to be increasingly on the minds of those of us taking HIV treatment, especially in the past few years with the accumulation of studies showing that some HIV medications may themselves cause weight gain.

As a result, POZ will regularly feature articles on nutrition and fitness. To get us started, we're spotlighting recipes for healthy comfort foods. Click here for more.

Last but certainly not least, we're thrilled to publish another edition of POZ en Español. Click here to read it!

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/maybe-time