



Renowned AIDS Doctor Tests Positive for COVID-19

Michael Saag, MD, opened an HIV clinic in Alabama in 1988. Listen to a recent podcast with the infectious disease specialist.

March 19, 2020 By [Trent Straube](#)

A doctor who's been on the front line of the fight against AIDS since the 1980s has tested positive for COVID-19. "In an ironic twist, I have been dx'd with COVID-19," tweeted Michael Saag, MD, on March 17. "It is unclear where I picked up the virus...but that is the point! It is everywhere. And we can't be too careful."

Saag is an infectious disease specialist and professor of medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Center for AIDS Research.

1 / In an ironic twist, I have been dx'd with COVID-19. So far I am doing well. It is unclear where I picked up the virus...but that is the point! It is everywhere. And we can't be too careful.

— Michael Saag (@msaagmd) [March 18, 2020](#)

[UAB released a statement](#) regarding the situation. It read in part: "Mike Saag, MD, a physician in the UAB Division of Infectious Disease, has tested positive for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). He wishes to make his case known as an example of the COVID-19 reality and the importance of practicing aggressive social distancing. As Dr. Saag will share, he was exposed on a family visit to New York City. Dr. Saag and UAB are taking precautionary measures to promote a safe environment, and we will diligently work with health department officials to identify and notify anyone who may have been exposed."

This morning, [@CNN](#) is reporting that US coronavirus cases increased 40% in the last 24 hours, echoing a rate mentioned by [@msaagmd](#) in this episode: <https://t.co/9KjDKPBP1q>
— Uncommonatory Podcast (@UncommonatoryPod) [March 19, 2020](#)

On March 15, Saag appeared on the podcast Uncommonatory, hosted by Marty Duren, and spoke about COVID-19 and the urgency of acting now to slow the spread. You can listen to [that episode of Uncommonatory here](#).

In 1988, Saag founded the HIV/AIDS clinic 1917 Clinic, named after its address, 1917 Fifth Avenue South. Last year, [it was announced](#) that the thriving clinic would move to a new home and triple in size by 2021.

About two years ago, the groundbreaking 1917 Clinic celebrated a milestone. For more, read "[Trailblazing HIV/AIDS Clinic in Alabama Celebrates 30 Years](#)." Also, Saag published a memoir in 2014 titled Positive: One Doctor's Personal Encounters With Death, Life, and the US Healthcare System. Read a POZ interview with him about it [here](#).

Go to poz.com/tag/coronavirus for our continuing coverage of COVID-19.

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