



A Cure for AIDS: The HIV Activists Turning Hope into Action

June 25, 2013 By [Mark S. King](#)

My first “AIDS job” in 1987 was at the oldest AIDS organization in Los Angeles, LA Shanti, where we provided emotional support to clients with AIDS who were usually in their last weeks of life. The intimacy our trained volunteers experienced with the dying, helping them find some inner peace as they left us, is worthy of its own blog posting sometime. Let’s just say it was intense.

We hoped for a cure early on, and then our hope faded. Before long, we didn’t dare hope any longer. We just wanted treatment to ease the suffering and slow the dying, and those prayers were answered in 1996 with the advent of protease inhibitors. It seemed greedy to tempt the fates and begin asking for a total cure again.

But greed isn’t what is driving the treatment advocates you are about to meet in my latest video blog. Far from it. They have faith, based on scientific research and some hopefulness of their own, that a cure for HIV disease can be found. And they care enough about our community to keep pressing the issue at HIV research conferences.

They are cautiously optimistic. But their faith is contagious, if you’ll pardon the choice of words. And they also know that that we got protease inhibitors because of the same kind of tireless community efforts that they are displaying now.

In fact, one can easily connect the dots from the activists shown in the Oscar nominated documentary [How to Survive a Plague](#) to this current crop of treatment advocates hoping to take HIV research across the finish line.

You can take part in all of this, of course. To volunteer for a clinical trial or see what might be happening in your area, visit [ResearchMatch.org](#) or [ClinicalTrials.gov](#). If you’d like to join the advocates in their work or follow their progress more closely, check out the [AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition](#).

I’d like to thank the always resourceful [Nelson Vergel](#) for gaining me access to a gathering of these community activists. For updates of current cure research, Nelson has excellent posts [on TheBody.com like this one](#).

I’d like to thank those who participated on-camera: Jeff Berry from [Positively Aware](#), Jeff Taylor of

the [AIDS Treatment Activism Coalition](#), Moises Agosto of the [National Minority AIDS Council](#), Steven Wakefield of the [HIV Vaccine Trials Network](#), David Evans of [Project Inform](#), and poz activists Mark Hubbard and Matt Sharp.

Thanks for watching, and please be well.

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- See more at:

<http://marksking.com/my-fabulous-disease/a-cure-for-aids-the-hiv-advocates-turning-hope-into-action/#sthash.H0aFUCJD.dpuf>

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