Mark S. King and Guy Anthony on NPR

August 17, 2015 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I'm happy to highlight an NPR interview featuring two very deserving HIV/AIDS advocates -- Mark S. King (a POZ blogger and a 2011 POZ 100 honoree) and Guy Anthony (a POZ blogger and a 2014 POZ 100 honoree).

In the wake of the recent HIV outbreak in Indiana (click here for an in-depth article by former POZ editor-in-chief Walter Armstrong on the aftermath of that outbreak), NPR wanted to get an update on the epidemic in general.

Mark, as a long-term survivor, and Guy, as someone diagnosed two decades after Mark, offer their respective insights. It comes as no surprise to me that both cite stigma as a persistent obstacle for people living with the virus.

From the interview:

"It's my firm belief that as medications have improved, and as the lives of those of us with HIV have improved, social stigma has risen," King says. "In the early years, we were doing everything we could just to help the dying, and there was no time to point fingers or blame or judge people ...

"Now, if you were to test positive today, how did that happen? What a disappointment you are. Why weren't you listening to all these prevention messages that we've been giving you all these years? You must be a

terrible person.”

That rings true for Anthony.

“I was more so afraid of the stigma attached to the disease than the actual disease,” he says. “You know, because every day I have to sort of wake up and deal with the fact that I am a black gay man in America. And that’s difficult in itself. So, to add, HIV positive serostatus onto that, it can be a lot.”

Click here to listen to the full interview.

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