# Seeing Friends Get the #COVID19 Vaccine On Social Media

January 4, 2021 By Shawn Decker

Thank you to all of the healthcare workers who submitted their pictures for this blog post. All my love- S

Although we have seen the end of a year marked by the most deaths in the United States in over a hundred years, Dr. Fauci and many others are saying that the worst is still ahead of us. Back in September, the writing was on the wall as the holidays approached, and I shared my thoughts on what Thanksgiving had in store for us...

Back then, I never thought I'd be scrolling through Facebook and seeing pictures of friends receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. These friends are healthcare workers, and deserve to be first in line. Many of them have seen the worst of this pandemic thus far, and will be there through the undoubtedly harsh winter months that lie ahead. In my life, I've been called a hero quite a few times for speaking up on behalf of myself and the HIV positive community. I'm honored, but I don't consider myself a hero. I'm just trying to help people understand the effects of stigma and, maybe, help someone else take some power over their own HIV diagnosis.

Those in healthcare? In my eyes they are the true heroes. They may say, "oh but we aren't heroes we are just trying to do our jobs".... to which I respectfully say: fuck you, you're a hero! I know

many people are wary about receiving a vaccine that came through quicker than many of us anticipated. So it should be no surprise that the very people who have been fighting by the bedside of those infected with COVID-19 are also trying to save the rest of us by going public with their own vaccinations, and showing us that it is safe to receive one.

It will be months before many of us have the option of receiving the vaccine. I know I'm taking it at my first opportunity. I want to get back to my tradition of spending Thanksgiving in Las Vegas with my tofurky-eatin' friends, and a vaccine is the only way I'd ever consider travel outside of my pajamas again. I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you that, many years ago, I had a different view on medications... and it nearly cost me my life. In 1999, if I had not overcome my fear of side effects of HIV medications, I'm convinced that I wouldn't be here today. I wouldn't have lived to see another pandemic if I had chosen to wait any longer than I did.

And what a goddamn shame that would have been, right?

But, in all seriousness, the first pandemic of my lifetime was a bit harder on me, personally. I was a kid. There were no HIV medications when I was diagnosed. The messaging today is "U=U", which I just saw on television nestled in an ad for HIV medication... the first round of messaging for me as a newly minted positoid? "Don't get this, it will kill you."

COVID-19 has certainly changed a few things in my daily life. But I'm fortunate that I live a life that allows me to remain safe, so the sacrifices of keeping a low profile are much easier for me than it is for many others. I've known a few people now that have tested positive, but as of yet I haven't lost anyone. I'm deeply worried about those I know who have a cavalier attitude about the pandemic, or are suspicious of the vaccine. I know that it's very hard to change someone else's mind when it comes to these situations. I remember when friends tried to change my view on HIV medications, but none of that mattered until I needed them and was ready to take them myself...

There’s so much uncertainty out there. But one thing we must agree on is that our healthcare workers are going through hell in their attempts to help us in these difficult times. The very least we can do to help them is to help ourselves by staying as safe as our circumstances allow. And if the worst happens, well, at least we know that they are there for us. As they’ve always been. So in honor of healthcare workers, and how tough they’ve had it, I’ll keep laying low. And I won’t be dragging my feet when the time comes to saddle up and get vaccinated.

I hope you’ll consider doing the same.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/seeing-friends-get-covid19-vaccine-social-media