



The New Meaning of 'HIV Free'

June 17, 2014 By [Shawn Decker](#)

Remember when “HIV free” simply meant living without the virus in your body? Well, terrible laws and even worse implementation have created a new definition for this term. Now, “HIV Free” means the release of someone who was erroneously sentenced under HIV disclosure laws.

Not familiar with these laws? [The Sero Project](#) can get you up to speed better than I can. But basically, in many states, if you are HIV positive, you can be held criminally accountable for having sex with someone if you don't disclose your HIV status... **even if you wear a condom.**

The new HIV Free experienced a victory last week [when the Iowa State Supreme Court overturned the conviction](#) of Nick Rhoades. [POZ did a feature of Rhoades's plight in 2012](#). I'm happy for Nick, and the hope is that this ruling will pave the way for other states to dial back their horrible HIV laws. They don't work in preventing HIV- quite the opposite, I think these laws scare people away from getting tested for HIV.

Mark King attended this month's HIV Is Not A Crime Conference and [wrote this powerful blog entry about it](#). Watch his video below. We need to do everything we can to make people with HIV... HIV Free.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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