Reaction To National AIDS Strategy

July 14, 2010 By Shawn Decker

On Tuesday the National HIV/AIDS Strategy was released to much fanfare before the White House's reception dinner for the AIDS community later in the evening- the first of it's kind since the epidemic hit this country well over two decades ago.

We've come a long way since the first president to confront the emerging crisis- Reagan- refused to even acknowledge HIV, let alone the people who's lives were being altered and taken by the virus. Proof was in the pudding on Tuesday that things have changed, especially when the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, uttered the "c" word- condom- in her briefing about the strategy.

I made a desperate attempt to weasel my way to Washington through this very blog and bragging about how many views it gets. I begged, actually- grovelled is probably a better word. And I still couldn't score an invite to the historic gathering of positoids at the White House. So I did what anyone in my position would do: I went into the mountains and got hopped up on hallucinogens to deal with my feelings of rejection.

This is what I recorded.

Actually, that's not my voice or precious experience in the video. But it's contents provide some clues as to how we as the AIDS community should respond to this new strategy and lovefest with the attention the White House is investing in our cause, in our lives. The strategy is full of old ideas and goals that so many of us have been working towards for years now. We can't be overwhelmed by the thought of a US President caring about people with AIDS who live in this country; in fact, to get further funding to continue life-saving programs like ADAP, we have to encourage our elected officials to recognize that we live in their voting district- and that we *do* vote.

In that regard, Barack needs us just as much- if not more- than we need him.

If we don't take this incredible opportunity then we may as well be tripping out in the mountains, crying over double rainbows while our fellow positoids continue to die while waiting for their live-saving treatments. Because if the political pendulum swings mightily in the other direction in 2012, then we all will be packing our bags, replacing our HIV meds with mushrooms, and heading for the hills.

Positively Yours,

Shawn

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