

PUBLISHED BY:



VOICES

THE VOICE OF DELAWARE'S HIV COMMUNITY

FALL EDITION • SEPTEMBER 2013 • VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 2



27TH AIDS WALK DELAWARE, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2013

The 27th Annual AIDS Walk is being held on Saturday, September 28, 2013, with registration at 9 a.m. and the step off at 10 a.m. Once again this year the Walk is two walks on one day – at Dravo Plaza, Wilmington Riverfront and at Grove Park in Rehoboth Beach. Sign up now at www.aidswalkdelaware.org.



ornations into the Christina River at the Wilmington Riverfront or place them at the AIDS Ribbon sculpture in Rehoboth, let us remember all those whom we have lost to AIDS.

Awareness Although often overlooked, the value of awareness cannot be disregarded. In this media-driven world we are bombarded daily with thousands of messages – news, opinions and advertising. But how often do you see a news story about HIV/AIDS? Let's "remind" everyone that HIV/AIDS is still a problem worthy of their attention.

Is the AIDS Walk a priority for you?

Right now, we know of at least four other events that are scheduled for the day of the Walk, and dozens of walks/runs are scheduled for the weekends before and after. We also know that there are many demands on your time – work, kids, shopping, and chores. So, why is it important that we see you at the AIDS Walk? Why is it important that this is the most successful AIDS Walk Delaware ever?

Funding As this newsletter goes to press, we once again approach a financial crisis in Washington. Budget cuts, cuts to service, Sequestration and the uncertainty of the future of the Ryan White CARE Act all threaten the continuation of much-needed services to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS. It's too exhausting to discuss how this threat to funding would hurt those who currently receive services from the many AIDS agencies in Delaware. We must redouble our efforts to increase private donations to offset the cuts. Money is tight for many of us, but a \$10 or \$20 donation once a year can make all the difference. Many hands lighten the load.

Here are the Top 5 Reasons to Make Sure the AIDS Walk is on Your List of "Must Dos":

Solidarity Besides being a very social event for many, the AIDS Walk Delaware is a significant, once-a-year event that offers us all the opportunity to stand together to show the world that we are united in our dedication to see a world without HIV/AIDS. There's nothing more inspiring than seeing hundreds of people join together to show that they care. The message is loud and clear: the world might have "forgotten" about HIV/AIDS – but we haven't.

Community While it's great that we all walk together as a community, it is important to remember

Remembrance Over the past twenty-seven years the AIDS Walk Delaware has changed from a solemn memorial walk to one filled with exuberance and life, as effective treatment has changed the face of the disease. But we still must acknowledge the many, many lives that have been cut short by AIDS. These are the days, weeks and years with friends that have been stolen from us all. These are contributions to our world never realized, art never created, songs never sung. As we drop our



that all members of the AIDS service community benefit from the AIDS Walk because we work together as one continuum to provide services to both people with HIV/AIDS and the community at-large. All of the agencies that participate in the walk – the Consortium, AIDS Delaware, the Ministry of Caring/ House of Joseph II, Faith Community Partnership, and Beautiful Gate – benefit from the funds raised at the AIDS Walk Delaware, as do all of the people we serve.

So come out and join us at the Walk, or sponsor a team or walker at www.aidswalkdelaware.org or call 302.652.6776 to make a donation by phone. It's that important.

Also inside...

Letter from the Executive Director
Tax Credit Program

2
2

Gardner Cascade
Town Hall Meetings Scheduled

3
4

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for your incredible support so far this year that you have graciously shared with the Delaware HIV Consortium. Compassionate, generous and dedicated community members like you have allowed us to expand services, assist more clients, reduce our expenses and move closer to ending the AIDS epidemic as we know it today.

With the remarkable scientific advances of the past decade, we can see an end to this epidemic in our lifetime. Although an end may be in sight, now is the time we must work harder to use our funding more wisely and efficiently, and to change the paradigm of services to accommodate the enormous changes about to redefine our client needs and the services we provide.

Now is the time to seize this moment of opportunity, shift our direction and move full throttle ahead. We need to be as bold and courageous as those who came before us and who blazed the trail of HIV/AIDS grassroots activism. Their dedication served as the catalyst to developing the services we have today. We are poised to reimagine the state's response to the HIV/AIDS crisis at this critical juncture; like no other agency in Delaware. We are grateful to have the support of the community and the state, which helps us provide the resources we need to provide the quality continuum of care. We do this along with many other community service providers.

Difficult choices have to be made and we are making them in order to sustain the fragile system of care and to ensure standards of quality and that best practices are implemented statewide. We continue to always put our clients first and we are committed to fulfilling our mission until we end this epidemic.

Once again, more than 80% of new infections have infiltrated the gay and bisexual community, but it is not our only focus. Wherever there is a need in the state, the Delaware HIV Consortium will be there. In New Castle, Kent and Sussex Counties, we are helping all people know their status and improve their overall health. We have deep roots in our communities and you can trust that the Delaware HIV Consortium is fighting on behalf of all people living with HIV disease or at risk for HIV/AIDS. The Delaware HIV Consortium will be here leading the effort until there is no longer a need for our services.

We need your help now more than ever before. Hope is within our reach. Our state and all the people we serve are depending on us. Together we can achieve greatness and soar to new heights as we battle this epidemic and embrace the coming changes rather than be reactive. If we stand together, united and fearless of change, we can end this epidemic in our lifetime. Let us finally come together as one and fight this battle. Together, we can achieve this goal.

Peter Houle
Executive Director

NEWS IN BRIEF

- On May 8, Gov. Jack Markell signed Senate Bill 35, which restricts copays and coinsurance on specialty tier medications for serious longterm illnesses including HIV disease. Under the law, a patient's coinsurance or copayment fees will be limited to \$150 per month for up to a 30-day supply of any single specialty tier drug. Patients will also be able to request an exception to obtain a specialty drug that would not otherwise be available on a health plan formulary. The bill goes into effect on January 1, 2014, and was supported by the Delaware HIV Consortium (DHC).
- Delaware HIV Consortium is grateful for a grant from the Enterprise Holdings Foundation to the 2013 WOW Awards, in support of our services. Thanks to this contribution and the support of our sponsors, gross proceeds from the event were just over \$70,000.
- In late summer, the Consortium and OraSure Technologies conducted training for pharmacy managers of Walgreens designated as HIV Centers of Excellence. The training, conducted by Rebekah Parsons of Orasure, demonstrated use of the OraQuick ADVANCE® HIV test, which is sold at Walgreens stores.



TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

The Consortium's **Michael Brossette Memorial Fund (MBMF)** and **Housing Assistance Program** have been approved by the Delaware State Housing Authority for participation in its Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program. This means that contributions to the MBMF or Housing Assistance Program of at least \$2,500 (individual) and \$10,000 (corporation) may qualify for a 50 percent income tax credit from the State of Delaware. For example, if you have an income tax liability to Delaware and make a contribution of \$2,500, you would qualify for a tax credit of \$1,250.

Before making a contribution, we recommend that you discuss this program with your professional accounting and tax service advisor to see if this program meets your particular financial needs. There are currently about \$150,000 in tax credits left, but please don't delay!

For more information on how NAA works, check out this website: http://www.destatehousing.com/OtherPrograms/ot_naa.php or call DSHA at **302-739-4263**. If you have questions about this tax credit opportunity, go to www.delawarehiv.org or call us at 302-654-5471 and ask for Scott MacKenzie.

MANY THANKS TO OUR MAJOR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Walgreens

P/RMA



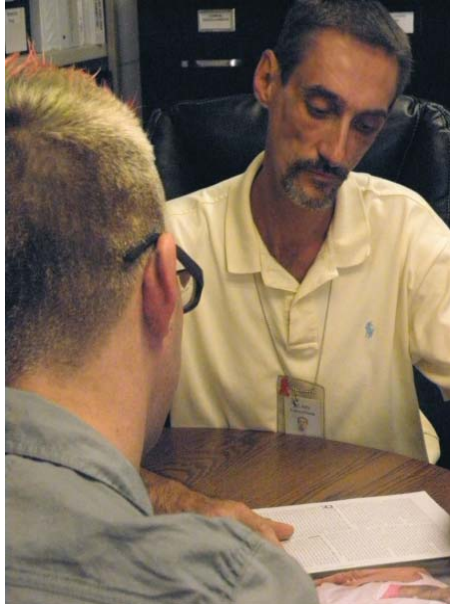
IRON HILL
BREWERY & RESTAURANT

THE GARDNER CASCADE

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

Steve (not his real name), 26 years old, had a nagging feeling earlier this summer. Although he felt just fine, he had been tested for HIV last year at the Delaware Pride Festival and it was positive.

He had a cold at the time and dismissed the test results as a fluke. But still, he had this feeling that he should get re-tested. His boyfriend, Tom, suggested that Steve talk to Joe Scarborough, community planner and outreach specialist at the Delaware HIV Consortium. Joe, who does counseling and testing twice a month at Walgreens on Market Street in Wilmington, suggested that both Steve and Tom come



in for an HIV test at the Consortium. One week later, Steve, Tom and two of their friends came in to be tested as a group. One by one they met with Joe to be counseled and to have a rapid oral swab test done, and 20 minutes later they met with Joe for their results. Three of the friends were negative.

Steve's test was positive.

Now, a few weeks later, Steve is waiting for the results of blood tests that measure the prevalence of the virus in his body (viral load) and CD4 cell count. Based on the results, his doctor at Christiana Care's HIV Community Program at the Wilmington Annex will recommend whether or not Steve needs to begin a medication regimen.

Steve's story is a very good example of how the Consortium and all of its partners in the HIV/AIDS community of care work together to provide the all-important "connection to care." Once Steve tested positive, Joe called Christiana Care to make an appointment for him to be seen immediately – first to have a confirmatory test and also to be linked to social workers who would guide him through the necessary steps to get connected to the services he needs.

"This whole thing has been very life-changing," said Steve. "Very stressful. The waiting is the hard part. Because Joe is open about being a person living with AIDS, I feel comfortable talking to him about my feelings during this and in discussing what lies ahead for me. Of course my boyfriend has been 100% supportive, but it's different because he's not positive. Joe has made me feel supported – programwise and emotionally."

"I mean – I'm 26 years old. I have always lived my life very care-free up till now," continued Steve. "That all has to change now. I

have to watch out for others and I have to be careful to take care of myself too. This is a learning process for me."

* * *

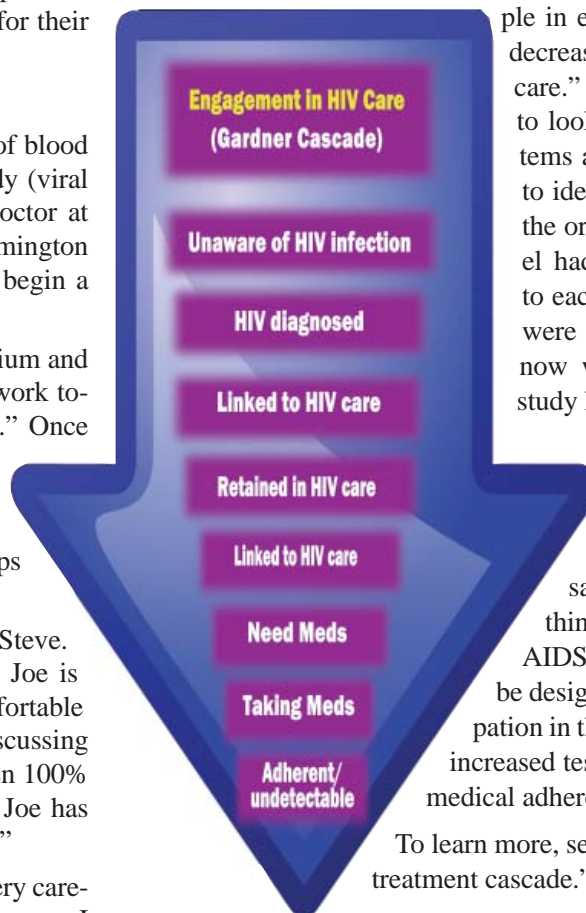
Nationally, more than one-third of all people who test positive and are linked to care become "lost to care," meaning that they discontinue participating in HIV care, in some way. Although they may come back into treatment at some point, health outcomes for these people are not as good as for those who stayed "linked to care."

GARDNER CASCADE: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Edward M. Gardner, a physician with the Denver Department of Public Health, and colleagues published an article which did an analysis of HIV/AIDS treatment in the United States. This article acknowledged the strong correlation between medical adherence to anti-retroviral therapies (ART) and undetectable viral loads/ decreased chance of transmission. More importantly, the article proposed a model of care which demonstrated the stages of care and quantified the "lost opportunities" to move patients from diagnosis to the end goal: undetectable viral load.

This model is represented in the following illustration, known as the HIV Treatment Cascade (also referred to as the Gardner Cascade). As indicated by the size of the boxes, the number of people

in each stage of treatment decreases as they are "lost to care." The model helps us to look at our treatment systems and to identify barriers to ideal HIV service. While the original article and model had percentages attached to each level, these numbers were from 2010. We are now working to mirror the study here in Delaware.



For us at the Delaware HIV Consortium, the Gardner Cascade sends a powerful message: Essentially everything we do as an HIV/AIDS service agency should be designed to improve participation in the system of care, from increased testing all the way to full medical adherence (undetectable).

To learn more, search the Web for "HIV treatment cascade."

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!



What's going on with HIV/AIDS in Delaware? What's being done... and what needs to be done? Now's your chance to give us your feedback. The Delaware HIV Consortium and the Delaware Division of Public Health are holding a series of **TOWN HALL MEETINGS** to get community feedback on HIV/AIDS programs and services – and we need **YOUR** voice. Experts in the field of

HIV treatment and prevention will be there to fill you in and answer your questions.

Wednesday, September 18, 2013 - 6:30-8 pm
First & Central Presbyterian, 11th & Market Sts., Wilmington

Wednesday, October 9, 2013, 6:30-8 pm
CAMP Rehoboth, 37 Baltimore Ave., Rehoboth

Wednesday, October 23, 2013, 6:30-8 pm
Dover Public Library, 35 Lookerman Plaza, Dover

If you have any questions, please call the Consortium at **302-654-5471** and ask for Joe Scarborough.

2013 ORNAMENTS ON SALE

The **2013 Collectible Holiday Ornament** from the Consortium is now available! This year's ornament, made of fine porcelain with 24-karat gold accents, is called "*Light Everlasting*" and represents the enduring symbol of wisdom, hope and inspiration. The ornament measures 2½ x 2 7/8 inches and is suspended by a red satin ribbon. The ornament is being sold for \$20 (+\$3 S&H) as a fundraiser in support of the Consortium's services to people with HIV/AIDS. For a limited time, there are small quantities of 2012 and 2011 ornaments available at a discount – only \$10 (plus \$3 S&H).



All three ornaments are available at www.delawarehiv.org or by calling **302-654-5471** and asking for Scott. The 2013 ornament is also available at the beach, thanks to our friends at **Proud Bookstore**, 146 Rehoboth Avenue (Village By The Sea), Rehoboth Beach, DE.

“EASY AS PIE” COMING SOON!

We are truly excited about the many new baked goods that we will be offering in our “Easy as Pie” fundraiser! This year, the annual fundraiser, in partnership with the Ministry of Caring/House of Joseph II will feature a variety of new additions like pumpkin roll from Achenbach Bakery and cheesecakes from Pellman's, both in Lancaster County! Look for more information in your mail or at www.delawarehiv.org in mid-October.

