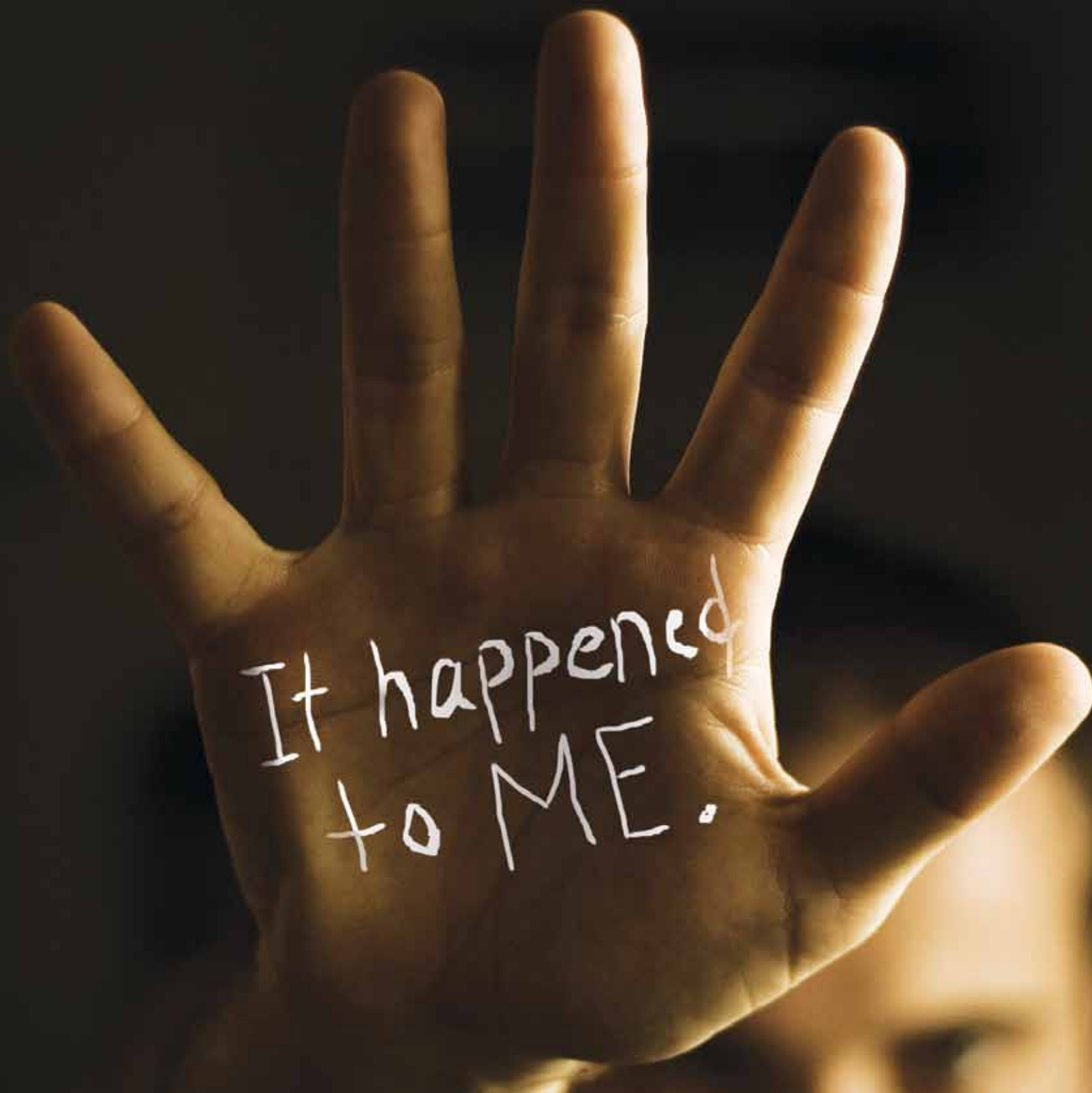




CAPITAL CITY
C C
A F
AIDS FUND
A NON PROFIT
CORPORATION

CARES
CENTER FOR AIDS
RESEARCH,
EDUCATION
& SERVICES

Western
Health
Advantage



A HUB OF HOPE

The role of nonprofits is to look after and help a part of our community that is, for one reason or another, lacking or needing additional support. As such, nonprofits often become a beacon for those who need their services. And no other Sacramento nonprofit performs this role better than CARES.

CARES, The Center for AIDS Research, Education & Services, is more than just the largest nonprofit HIV/AIDS clinic in the Sacramento region, it is a hub of hope for thousands of people who need STD and HIV testing, healthcare, counseling and a community where they can just be themselves.

CARES was created in 1989 by UC Davis Health System, Kaiser Permanente, CHW Mercy, Sutter Health and the county of Sacramento in response to the local AIDS epidemic. Now, CARES serves as a full-service testing, treatment, and prevention center for the greater Sacramento region.

The clinic offers comprehensive services, including a women's clinic, dental services, an on-site pharmacy, and counseling and nutritional education. CARES also has a free walk-in testing program and an outreach program to promote education about STDs and HIV/AIDS in effort to prevent the spread. CARES employees and patients have teamed with community leaders and various organizations in a diverse coalition to inform the public about the growing epidemic and prevalence of certain STDs in the Sacramento region through the Strategic

Initiative for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention.

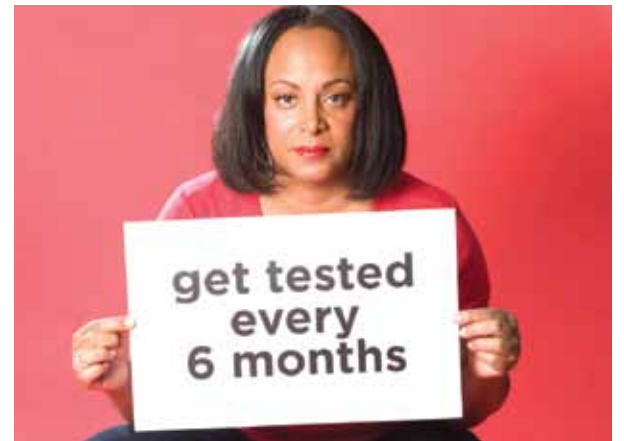
The staff at CARES doesn't want to scare people about STDs and HIV, but rather educate people and empower them to take charge of their sexual health. CARES nurse practitioner Emily Tsuchida says an open dialogue in our community about STDs will create awareness and foster prevention. "There just needs to be a conversation."

HIV/AIDS and STDs are still very real, and don't for a second think that you are invincible—these diseases and infections do not discriminate. Tsuchida says it's most often the people who don't think they have it that actually have it.

And the reality of STDs in Sacramento is especially startling. Recent reports even indicate that outbreaks of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis are on the rise.

Many CARES clients are very open about their HIV and STD history and diagnosis, with some even volunteering in community outreach and positive speaking events. And these clients come from all over the board, disproving any stereotype associated with HIV-infected patients. There are straight men, married couples, pregnant women, teenagers. All of the clients and CARES staff alike have one message, while it is possible to live with STDs and HIV, these diseases are absolutely preventable.

HIV and STDs are not going away, and a community-wide discussion about them is the only way to continue on the road of prevention. When a person is infected by HIV or other STDs, CARES is a place that they can come and have any problems addressed while being treated with compassion and kindness. Or, simply put by new patient Tony G. "Come to CARES. They care."



I NEVER THOUGHT THIS COULD HAPPEN TO ME...

BY KENDALL FIELDS

Guy Dutcher holds a photo of a skeletal 35-year-old. “That’s me,” he says, pointing to the barely 80-pound man with sallowness and hollowed cheeks. He lifts his shirt, exposing a gaping scar so big he can place his whole hand, palm down, into it. He traces his index finger over the brown scar tissue and points to his belly button, which is now on the left side of his stomach.

“This is my reality,” the 41-year-old says, adding there is nothing he can do to hide the scar. The scar and photo are remnants of four operations Dutcher had on his small intestine and reminders of the time when Dutcher almost lost his life.

“I’ll never take my shirt off in public again,” he says. “I just can’t deal with how people will react to me or how I will react to them looking at me.”

In 2005, Dutcher tested positive for HIV in his first ever STD test. But he didn’t just have HIV—he only had 26 T cells, which meant he had full blown AIDS.

Dutcher was hospitalized for eight months. He recalls his father telling him how he would just sit there and watch his son breathe to make sure he was still alive.

Although Dutcher was sexually promiscuous and a drug addict—but not a needle-user—he never thought he could get AIDS.

Like Dutcher, Dalene Caywood never thought she could get HIV—sure she had partied in the era of sex, drugs and rock ‘n’

roll, but at the time of her diagnosis people thought women didn’t get HIV.

Caywood was 38 when she was diagnosed with HIV and was in the last trimester of pregnancy with her second child.

Tears stream down Caywood’s face as she remembers when she found out she was HIV positive. “It was

bright and it was white and it was intense,” Caywood says, remembering the moments leading up to her diagnosis. “I can still smell the antiseptic and it makes me ill. The doctor comes in and looks at my tummy and says ‘It’s too bad you’re pregnant, you’ve got AIDS you’re going to die in six months’.”

Caywood says she hit her lowest point right after diagnosis. For 10 minutes she was suicidal. How could she have gotten HIV? Why should she keep living if she was already on the brink of death? Who would look after her son? What about the baby she was pregnant with?

But Caywood’s son snapped her out of those thoughts. And now, almost two decades later, Caywood proudly says “Today, I’m a survivor.”

When Caywood came to CARES, she was one of the few women clients. But CARES took her in, she says, and saved her life. The child she was pregnant with was born HIV positive and

is now 17 and living with an adoptive family. Caywood stays close to her daughter, encouraging her to go to CARES and take charge of her sexual health. She keeps an open conversation about preventing the spread of HIV and how she can continue to live with the virus, while not letting it define her.

Caywood says she has become known as “the condom lady” by her friends and family. She hopes by promoting STD awareness the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS is disbanded and society stops shunning the infected.

“THIS IS MY REALITY.”

But it’s not just promiscuous drug users or people with multiple partners who contract HIV. Victoria*, who is a single mom of three, became a mom at 16 and worked hard so she wouldn’t become “just another statistic.” She worked as a phlebotomist and was accidentally pricked by a needle at work. She was tested and found out she was HIV positive. But what was most devastating was her boyfriend of three years was also HIV positive and had known his status for five years prior to dating Victoria.

Victoria was devastated. How could someone she loved so much do something so harmful to her health?

Now, Victoria works as a community outreach speaker for CARES and hopes her story is a reminder you can never be too careful or too sure. No one, she says, should be ashamed or afraid to ask their partner about their status and ask to see tangible results. “How well do you really know the person you are sleeping with?” Victoria asks.

It is also important, Dutcher says, to know your sexual health status. He says the nerves or timidity associated with asking a partner shouldn’t factor into a healthy sexual relationship. “There is more shame in not knowing your status,” Dutcher says. “Love and respect yourself enough to protect yourself. It’s up to you whether you stay negative.”

Dutcher, who is now a positive speaker for youth, says he hopes his story and pain empower people to be sexually responsible. “This disease is 100 percent preventable. Preventing the spread shouldn’t be a choice.”

Dutcher, Caywood and Victoria all credit CARES for helping them live with their HIV. They also take on the CARES mission of promoting STD and HIV awareness because, although they have learned how to cope with this virus, they don’t want anyone else to have to.

**Victoria’s name has been changed to protect her privacy.*



DALENE CAYWOOD



GUY DUTCHER

TRUE STORY: I GOT A STD

BY SUKHI BRAR

Tina* sat nervously in the doctor's office waiting to find out what had caused the painful rash on her genitals. Fearing the worst, she didn't sleep at all the night before.

The doctor came in, looked at her rash and immediately knew Tina had genital warts. Devastated, Tina went home and grabbed a mirror to see what her genitals looked like with the warts. To her complete shock they looked just like the grotesque photos she had seen in books during sex education in school.

"They looked just like the ones they show you to make you not even think about having sex without protection. I never thought that would be me," Tina says.

Tina grew up in Sacramento and graduated from Sacramento State as a McNair Scholar. She did so well that she was offered a full-ride scholarship to the graduate school of her choice.

While at Sac State, Tina met a man she really liked. Eventually, they began having a sexual relationship. They talked about using protection, but the first time they slept together he asked if they could have unprotected sex. She did not feel right about this, but the man told her he was clean and that he would pull out so they would not have to worry about pregnancy. Tina expected that a partner of hers would tell her the truth when it came to STDs, so she trusted this man and had unprotected sex with him.

One month later, Tina got what she thought was a yeast infection and treated it as such. It went away, but returned two weeks later. She treated it again and it went away but again came back two weeks later.

Tina decided to get a pap smear. To her surprise the results of the test showed she had chlamydia.

Tina called her partner and he admitted he had been sleeping with other people, but denied that he had had unprotected sex with anyone else. That did not sit well with Tina and she ended the relationship. Luckily, chlamydia is curable, but that was not the end of the problems for Tina.

A couple of weeks after Tina ended her relationship, a rash developed on her genitals. She went to the doctor and that was when she found out about the genital warts.

After having contracted two sexually transmitted diseases from the same partner, Tina felt really low and used. Tina describes the situation as a rude awakening for her.

"It makes you really think that, OK someone would have my interests at heart because I have their interests at heart, but that is not how people function."

"IT BROUGHT A LITTLE BIT OF REALNESS TO MY LIFE."

When Tina called to tell the man about the second disease she contracted, he did not seem fazed whatsoever. "He acted like it didn't matter and still tried to sleep with me."

At one time Tina thought that even if she did get a disease like chlamydia she would be OK because it was curable. But when the genital warts came, the doctor told her that it was never going to go away. Tina thought about the embarrassment she would feel for the rest of her life having to tell potential partners about her disease.

Despite the trauma the STDs caused for Tina, she sees the situation as a blessing in disguise and she now has a job educating people on how to protect themselves from STDs.

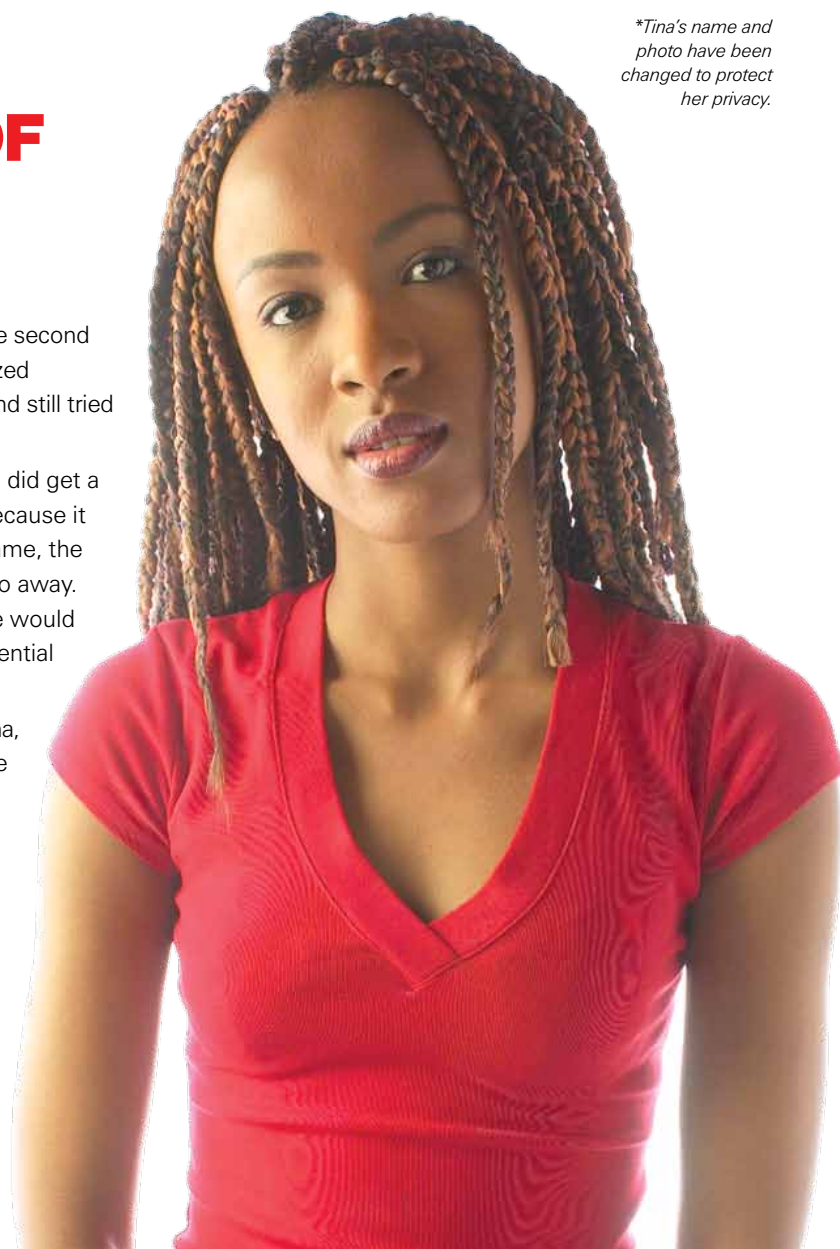
"It helps me in my job when I talk to girls. I let them know this can happen. I think that people think this only happens to people who sleep around with a lot of partners. It can happen even when you are just with one person. I just got caught up in a bad situation but that happens all the time," Tina says.

Tina's advice to everyone is to value yourself enough to say that you are not

going to have sex with somebody if you do not know their status. Ask your partners to be tested and look at their results.

"Have those conversations ahead of time and remember everything can't be cured with a pill. Remember that."

**Tina's name and photo have been changed to protect her privacy.*



STDS ON THE RISE IN SACRAMENTO

The Sacramento area has an alarmingly high rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Statistics provided by the California Department of Public Health examine the rates of some of the most prevalent sexually transmitted diseases in our area: chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis. The latest available data was released in 2011 and covers cases in 2010.

The statistics show that Sacramento County had the third highest rate of chlamydia in the state as of 2010. This was out of 58 counties total. Sacramento County also had the second highest rate of gonorrhea in the state and the 10th highest rate of syphilis.

In Sacramento County, teens and young adults from ages 15-24 have the highest rates of STDs out

of all age groups. Children under age 9 and adults over age 45 have the lowest rates. Women have a higher rate of chlamydia than men. However, men have a higher rate of syphilis than women. Men and women fair about even in the prevalence of gonorrhea.

Statistics from the California Department of Health also show that African-Americans have the

highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea while Latinos and African-Americans have the highest rates of syphilis. Since 2001, the rates of chlamydia in Sacramento County have been growing steadily for both men and women, while syphilis in males is on the decline after a sharp jump in cases in 2008. Cases of gonorrhea have also been on a slow but steady rise.

BY SUKHI BRAR

TRUE STORY: I'M HIV POSITIVE

BY MIKE BLOUNT

When Glenn Rowe, 43, walked into his doctor's office in 2009, he was caught up in a lifestyle of heavy drug use, carelessness and excess freedom. But it wasn't until a quarterly checkup that he learned that he might have contracted the HIV virus.

Rowe brought in his partner at the time with him to get tested. A short while later, the results came back. It was positive.

"I was pretty numb to the news," Rowe says. "He took it hard, and I just tried to be there, but I don't think anything I did was enough."

Three months after his partner was diagnosed, Rowe would receive confirmation from his doctor that he was also HIV positive.

"When it actually happened, I was like, 'I can overcome this. I can do this,'" Rowe says. "I kind of had an idea already, but I was still in the shock phase of things. I just wanted to move on."

The feeling that he could overcome his diagnosis was short-lived at first, according to Rowe. A few months later, the couple mutually agreed to end their relationship. There were hurt feelings. But Rowe was quick not to blame the relationship or anyone for what happened.

Rather, he said the use of methamphetamine and GHB, a central nervous system depressant, caused him to make bad decisions—ones that would have a lifetime impact. He was also drinking heavily at the time.

"I was kind of floundering in the Bay Area and I moved to Sacramento because I got a good job," Rowe says. "Then I started going out and I wasn't really paying attention to anything. I started using drugs and I was just having a good time."

Rowe admits that he never considered what the consequences could be. He was just living in the moment.

"I was playing with guys that were HIV positive and I didn't know that they were positive," Rowe says. "I wasn't really taking care of myself. We all took drugs. We were just open about things like that. That's really what led to all this."

There was a period of a few months following his diagnosis that he was in denial. He became depressed and relapsed in taking drugs. Then he remembered a friend telling him about a non-profit HIV/AIDS clinic he could go get help. That's when he sought out help from CARES.

"I came here to get treatment before, but I kind of just let them go," Rowe says. "I didn't really want to be associated with them. But when I started getting services, things started taking off for me on the right track."

In order to get back on the right track, Rowe says he needed an outlet to deal with his issues and put things in perspective. He credits the staff and resources at CARES for helping him put his life back together. He refers to the organization as a "one-stop shop" for

resources and support.

And Rowe is now aiming to inspire others to get tested and avoid making the same mistakes he did by speaking publicly about his experiences being diagnosed as HIV positive and living with the virus.

"I am not HIV," Rowe says. "It is something that I have, but I am me. I am clean and sober now, I go to school and I volunteer in the community. Life is going really well for me. I put myself back on the right track."

Rowe is now in his third year of sobriety and he couldn't be more optimistic about his future. He is currently working to get a computer network management degree and is a very active hiker. When



he is not working with CARES, he also volunteers for the Sacramento Gay and Lesbian center

Speaking to others about his life has given him a chance to give back to the organizations that have been a strong support base for him since his

"I PUT MYSELF BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK."

diagnosis. That support base, Rowe says, is one of the reasons he was able to make the transition back to a sense of normalcy.

For others who might be on the fence about getting tested or just being careless, Rowe stresses the need to talk with others about their problems.

"Talk with a friend about it and seek out professional social help like counseling," Rowe says. "And definitely go to the doctor and find out your health conditions. Encourage your friends to get tested so we can put a stop to this disease."

WHAT IS HIV/AIDS?

BY MIKE BLOUNT

HIV is the human immunodeficiency virus. The infection causes a progressive attack of a person's immune system, causing an inability to fend off infections and diseases. AIDS, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, refers to the most advanced stages of HIV infection.

HIV can only be transmitted several different ways, including unprotected oral sex and unprotected vaginal or anal sex. Also, a person can be infected through transfusions of contaminated blood, the sharing of contaminated syringes or needles, and between a mother and infant during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS estimated there are

34,000,000

people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide as of 2010. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are

1,000,000

people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States.

While there have been great strides in the prevention of HIV transmission and care of those infected with HIV in recent years, HIV/AIDS still remains one of the world's most significant public health concerns—particularly in impoverished countries where a lack of HIV education allows the virus to spread more quickly.

Recent advances in and access to antiretroviral therapy have given HIV-positive people the chance to live longer and healthier lives. But it is estimated that more than

7,000,000

people are still in need of the treatment and have no access to it, according to The World Health Organization.

HAVE AN HONEST TALK WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN YOUR LIFE

SEXUAL HEALTH CHECKLIST



DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO YOU

HERE ARE STRATEGIES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HIV & STDs:

- Abstain from sex and drug use OR limit the number of partners and do it safely
- Get tested for HIV and other STDs routinely
- Know where to find condoms and lube, and use them properly
- Use sterile needles and syringes
- If HIV-positive, get treated to lower the amount of virus in the blood

Here is a sexual health checklist with questions that you can ask yourself about you, your partner, your medical provider, and your test counselor:

THINGS FOR YOU

- ☐ What does “sexual health” mean to you?
- ☐ What influences you to have sex?
- ☐ Do you fall for the “hot” factor, presuming someone’s status based on their appearance?
- ☐ Are you embarrassed to talk about your sexual activity?
- ☐ How much do you know about STDs and HIV / AIDS?
- ☐ Do you know how STDs and HIV are spread?
- ☐ Have you ever been tested?
- ☐ Do you know where you can get tested?
- ☐ Do you know how to use birth control and condoms?

THINGS FOR YOUR PARTNER

- ☐ Has your partner ever been tested?
- ☐ When was the last time you and your partner got tested?
- ☐ Have you or he / she had unprotected sex since then?

THINGS FOR YOUR MEDICAL PROVIDER

- ☐ Do you have a medical provider who you trust and be open with about your sexual history?
- ☐ Have you developed a rapport with your medical provider so you can have an open communication and if you are a minor can you do so without a parent present?
- ☐ Have you been honest with your medical provider about your sexual activity and history?
- ☐ Has your medical provider done a baseline STD and HIV test on you?
- ☐ Has your medical provider tested you since the last time you had unprotected sex?

THINGS FOR YOUR TEST COUNSELOR

- ☐ What is the window period for testing?
If you get tested now will you get a premature negative?
- ☐ How can you make sure you stay negative?
- ☐ How can you live with an STD or HIV / AIDS?
- ☐ How can you prevent the spread of a STD or HIV if you have it?

STARTING THE DIALOGUE

Emily Tsuchida has been a nurse practitioner at CARES for more than nine years. She oversees the medical floor and manages the care of about 500 patients. Tsuchida performs routine check-ups and follow-ups on HIV patients, who need to be seen every three to four months to ensure that the virus is controlled. Tsuchida also does work in the clinic's urgent care section.

Who gets HIV? What types of people do you come across at CARES?

I have, I think, the most diverse group of people. I would say that my practice is 60 percent straight, which is unusual, and most of them are women. And some of them were infected as ex-drug users or current drug users. But many of them also were infected by men who were on the down low, unfaithful. And some of them were infected just because they had a rare situation.

I'll give you an example of a new patient of mine who is a 30-year-old female who is newly infected. She is newly married and decided to get pregnant and on her prenatal panel, she discovered she had HIV. She has had three boyfriends in her life, no history of IV drug use, no other risk factors—except for having those three boyfriends. And her husband is negative. And on diagnosis she actually found out that she had AIDS, she had 17 T cells. At 30, no one in their wildest dreams would have expected she would have HIV, so no one ever offered her a test. ... It's not your sort of typical stereotype of a young, gay, promiscuous male ... there is really a huge diversity of people.

Another patient of mine is a man, 49, who has been married for five years—he is a really nice guy, super straight dude, a hunter type of guy—went in to his doctor for a physical and the doctor asked if he had ever had sex without a condom. Sure enough, he had HIV. He went to five other sites to get confirmatory testing because he just couldn't believe it. There he was, HIV positive. It just blew his mind because it didn't fit into his life.

What can people do to prevent HIV/AIDS?

In this country, we have access to everything we need. There are free condoms everywhere, there's needle exchange. You can get clean needles even if you don't want to stop. So to me, it is 100 percent preventable at this point here. And that is what is so concerning—people just keep coming in. I have about 25 young men who are younger than 21 who are newly infected because they think they will just get it anyways and if they do, they can just take a pill.

So, the whole idea of prevention is really a big question, because I don't know that what we are doing is working. One thing that is important is that everybody gets tested. And everybody who is infected gets

treatment to lower the amount of virus that is in their blood because if you do that, then it really decreases the rate of transmission. You could essentially stop it from spreading. But you have to get tested.

Until we teach people to protect themselves and respect themselves, it is just going to keep spreading. And then there is this idea that the meds are easy. They aren't. They all have side effects. ... People don't realize the long-term effects of having HIV. ... Everyone needs to get tested, so they don't have to go through this.

When should you get tested? What is the window period for testing?

Everyone should get a baseline test, no matter who you are. The CDC recommends that everyone get a baseline test from 16 years old. And then based on your risk factors we'll determine how often you test. If I am single and getting new partners, then I should get tested every year. And same goes if you have a drug issue.

How do you test for HIV?

The test is an antibody test. Our bodies make antibodies to everything we come in contact with, so I could draw [someone's] blood and see if [they] had chicken pox when [they] were young because of the antibodies left over. So, we look for those antibodies and that is what gives you a positive or negative test—if you have the antibodies. Some people can take out to six months to develop the antibodies. Here, the way we test is kind of cool because the test takes like 20 minutes. It's an oral swab, and they get counseling while they are waiting for the results, so hopefully they learn something and don't need to be tested again.

How is HIV/AIDS spread?

HIV is found in semen, vaginal fluid, breast milk and the red blood you see. It's not in saliva, it's not in sweat, it's not in tears. There is no documented case of getting HIV through casual contact—that's sharing of silverware, living in the same house as someone that you are not sexually active with (roommates, family members). You just don't get infected that way. You get that infected blood into your bloodstream during sex, during sharing of needles and during birth and in

breast milk. You have to do one of those acts to get infected with HIV.

Do you feel like there needs to be more of a movement in the medical community to test and prevent the spread of STDs and HIV?

Physicians, nurse practitioners, PAs, pediatricians should be having this dialogue, and they don't. I mean, I have been going to the doctor for 50 years, and they have never offered an HIV test. I mean, I am an HIV practitioner, and they know it. They still don't offer it to me! Nor do they take a sexual history to even find out if I should be tested.

Why is there a stigma associated with STDs and HIV? Where does it come from?

The assumption is that you have done something bad and wrong and that is why you have HIV. And even if you are getting tested, it is still there because it is like "What did you do wrong? You either had sex or you're a junkie. But just about everyone has sex; it's how we all end up here.

People still think it's "them," it's not me. It's a gay thing. It's a junkie thing. It's a poor thing. I always say it doesn't matter what color you are, what religion you are, how much money you have or who you sleep with. This will jump from any human being to any human being. And that's what it is. Until we get a handle on that as a whole community it's not going to go away—it's just not going to go away.



WHERE TO GO

CAPITAL CITY AIDS FUND

Capital City AIDS Fund (CCAF) raises money for HIV/AIDS service providers in the Sacramento region and works to combat the virus through its Education & Prevention Fund that distributes 20,000 free condoms a month.

CCAF further invests in people and the community through the Helen Veress-Mitchell Scholarship Fund, helping individuals living with HIV/AIDS go to college.

WWW.CAPCITYAIDSFUND.ORG
916-448-1110



CARES CLINIC

CARES provides a wide range of comprehensive services and programs for persons living with HIV in one convenient location.

CARES also offers free & confidential walk-in and appointment HIV and STD testing: Monday through Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm, and Thursday, 9:00am – 7:00pm. (NOTE: No STD testing after 5:00pm)

Call 916-914-6305 for more information and to schedule an appointment.

1500 21ST STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95811
WWW.CARESCLINIC.ORG
916-443-3299



CONDOM FINDER

Studies show condoms to be 95 percent effective in reducing the risk of HIV infection. Condoms are also effective in preventing the transmission of STDs.

The CARES Condom Distribution Program aims to increase condom availability and education in the Sacramento area. The goal is to give out 1 million free condoms every year.

Find free condoms and lube at a location near you or become a distributor and order free condoms and lube for your location.

WWW.CONDOMFINDER.ORG
916-914-6246

