Fight the Power

May 8, 2017 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

Glenna McCarthy is a fighter. She has overcome obstacles such as injection drug use and two stints in prison. However, being diagnosed with both HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) became the fight of her life.

McCarthy started HIV treatment in jail and today maintains an undetectable HIV viral load. Years later, she started seeing a gastrointestinal specialist for stomach problems and learned that she had moderate liver disease and abnormal liver enzyme tests, so she decided to start hep C treatment.

McCarthy was part of the last group of patients to use interferon-based therapy, which had severe side effects. She fought through the aches and pains to a cure. As an HCV navigator, she helps others get through their hep C treatment, which has significantly improved with the newer medications. Click here to read her story.

Before struggling with side effects, McCarthy had to deal with the difficulties of paying for her HCV treatment. At first, she couldn't get insurance to cover her treatment, but Medicaid paid for it eventually. Medicaid programs vary from state to state, as do private insurers. Click here for more information.

At 50, McCarthy knows what it's like aging with hep C. People born between 1945 and 1965 have the highest rate of hep C in the United States—and older HCV-positive people have some disadvantages compared with younger people with the virus. Click here for more.

McCarthy is an advocate for getting everyone with hep C cured, especially with the new meds, which take weeks instead of months to work and are relatively free of side effects. HCV treatment has multiple health benefits in addition to a cure. Click here to learn more.

Widespread treatment also offers the possibility of eliminating hep C as a public health threat. Studies have shown that treating people with HCV can help curb the epidemic. Health officials in New York and San Francisco are working on how to conquer hep C coast to coast. Click here to find out how.

For additional news on hep C, please go to hepmag.com for the latest updates!

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