Good Times, Bad Times

June 5, 2017 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

The 64-year-old advocate is now cured of hepatitis C virus (HCV), his HIV viral load is undetectable, and he is addiction-free. Getting to this place in his life wasn't easy.

As a boy, he and his family moved from rural Mississippi to Chicago, where they found a less hostile atmosphere that was just as segregated. Starting in high school, he developed a passion for sports and heroin. His drug use continued for years, through an early marriage and two kids. The marriage ended after five years, in part because of his drug use.

In 1978, McLoyd was diagnosed with "non-A, non-B" hepatitis, now known as hep C. Still in the grips of his addiction, he kept drinking and using, eventually losing his job. He started shoplifting to support his habit, which landed him in jail. In 1997, the first thing he did when he was released was get an HIV test. His results were positive.

Hospitalized shortly after that, he started the long journey to his current wellness. In 2004, he tried to get cured of hep C using older treatments. After a difficult year filled with side effects, he did not clear his HCV.

McLoyd tried again in 2015 with a new hep C drug, but he was among the few who did not succeed. In 2016, a new HCV drug combination used along with an old med finally succeeded in a cure. Click here to get inspired by his story.

McLoyd's experiences in trying to get cured of hep C attest to how long we've come but also how far we have left to go. There is still room for improvement to HCV treatment. Click here for more.

Although he is now hep C–free, McLoyd still struggles with cirrhosis, which is severe liver damage. It's usually irreversible, with liver transplantation being the only treatment, but nearly half of HCV-positive people with cirrhosis who were cured of the virus have seen reversal. Studies show that a hep C cure has even more benefits for those with cirrhosis. Click here for more.

Even though we have an HCV cure, most people who need it still don't have access. For many, the drug costs keep a cure out of reach. Click here to read how Congress can control costs.

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