With a Little Help From My Friends

September 5, 2016 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

Shirley Barger, a retired computer expert in San Francisco, was cured of hepatitis C virus (HCV) in 2013 by the newer HCV drugs. Now 67 years old, she feels great. That's no small achievement, especially since she had tried to get cured twice before on older HCV drugs, which had terrible side effects.

As a result of learning how to advocate for herself, including getting access to the hep C treatment that cured her, Barger became an HCV advocate for all people living with the virus. As cochair of the San Francisco Hepatitis C Task Force, among her many advocacy roles, Barger continues to fight for expanding access to treatment and related services.

Although Barger could have stepped away from advocacy after being cured, she deliberately decided to keep at it. For her, helping others is not only charitable, but also therapeutic. Click here to learn more about her HCV journey.

Despite the ongoing concerns over the high costs of newer hep C treatments, Massachusetts became the latest state to lift restrictions on HCV drugs under its Medicaid program. Restrictive policies on HCV drugs across the country are increasingly under pressure: Florida, New York, Washington state and Delaware have made similar moves.

Click here to read more about new efforts to expand access to hep C treatment and for news on telemedicine for hep C care, federal plans to combat the U.S. opioid epidemic and more.

Barger's experience shows us that you can be cured despite previously failed attempts. Now, a new study provides further support to the idea that a second try at hep C treatment offers an excellent chance of success at a cure, especially among people who take the latest interferon-free hep C regimens.

Click here to read more about that study, as well as news on upcoming all-genotype treatments for HCV and the potential that increased hep C testing may free up more livers for transplants.

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