Mexican-American Rocker Launches Advocacy Tour Post–Hepatitis C Treatment

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Fourteen years after collapsing onstage due to hepatitis C virus (HCV)–related complications, Texas rocker Alejandro Escovedo is now cured of the virus and touring across the country on behalf of the Prevent Cancer Foundation to help raise awareness of the connection between certain viruses and cancer, The Dallas News reports.

The 67-year-old Mexican-American singer and guitarist was recently named a national spokesman for "Think About the Link," the Prevent Cancer Foundation's prevention and education campaign that focuses on hepatitis C, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human papillomavirus (HPV). He has filmed a public service announcement and last month launched a 12-city concert tour as part of his advocacy.

Escovedo's goal is to serve as a high-profile example and help folks understand that although hepatitis C can be a silent killer for those who leave it untreated, it can now be cured thanks to new treatments. The positive message aligns with the rocker's own story.

The musician says he's not sure how he contracted the virus and had no idea he was living with HCV until 1996, after he felt sick during a Canadian tour. Back then, hepatitis C treatment options were limited, so Escovedo did nothing. Then, in 2003, he began vomiting blood before a performance in Phoenix. After the show, doctors told him the virus had caused cirrhosis of the liver and told him he had just a year to live.

Against sizable odds, the singer's hepatitis C never developed into liver cancer, and he was able to wait until 2015 to undergo next-generation treatment. Now that Escovedo is cured, he is excited to share his story with the world and plans to use his fame for advocacy, especially among fellow Latinos.

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