# Priority Patients

October 30, 2017 By Carleen McGuffey

I wrote this article a week or so ago about how throwing divisive political issues into the Hepatitis-C arena only causes division. Since then I have received hate mail, threats, been called a psycho bitch, been unfriended, blocked, gossiped about, mocked and excluded from Hep-C organizations, been told I was delusional for my faith, and received threats of physical violence. Its ok, I considered the risks before posting, and although the backlash went too far I felt like as a Patient Advocate it was important to speak up.

I think it's important to point out that the vitriolic response to my plea for unity does make the point that people can't bring these issues up and remain united.

Prior to writing this article, I tried to make private appeals to my Hep-C leaders to no avail, in one instance my Hep-C leader refused to read my email calling me a racist for even making an appeal for unity.

A shocking 70 percent of Americans believe the country is divided as badly today as it was during the Vietnam War era of protests and riots. These hot-button issues that keep us divided are often touted loud and proud by our countries most prominent Hepatitis-C Organizations. Regardless of what we believe regarding transgender bathrooms, and refusing to stand for the National Anthem, I hope we can understand and consider that those issues don't produce unity and they don't make for good relationships with about half of all legislatures, advocates, the public, patients and Americans.

Speaking of patients. According to data produced by the CDC, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Virginia are most vulnerable to Hepatitis-C. This coincides with our own experience while testing in those areas, where we have seen positive rates up to 25%. These areas are notoriously conservative and often radically loyal to the current Administration. It makes me wonder how we can engage these communities effectively when we are pushing a radical left-wing agenda? Are these people our priority? Will they receive the same passion, and effort as the co-infected gay man from San Fransisco? Will we be able to love, serve and generously immerse ourselves in the Trump loving communities of West Virginia, or does our compassion stop at the edge of the left coast?

Despite the emotionalism involved in these issues, I do love this community.

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