Saddle Up to Eliminate Hepatitis C

February 13, 2017 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

More than a year ago, I met some incredible men who want to raise awareness about hepatitis C, fight the stigma that is attached to it, and get people tested and treated. There are lots of people who want to do this, but what sets these men apart is HOW they are going to do this.

The Plan: Three (how do I put this delicately?), seasoned elders are going to ride from Mexico to Canada along the Pacific Crest Trail. This is a 2,650 mile goal in the High Sierra. They are often asked, "What does riding 2,650 on horseback have to do with hepatitis C?" Their response, "We want our ride to capture your attention and inspire you. Throughout history people have gone on pilgrimages and vision quests. We see it as a journey that will most certainly change us. We hope it will change you as well." Their journey begins April 2018.

The Riders: They are long-time friends and now they call themselves Long Riders. They have lost friends to hepatitis C. Vic Ferrari was seriously ill from it. In the lowest moments of his hep C struggles, he made a promise to himself and friends now dead from hepatitis C. If he survived, he would do this ride. He asked his friend Frank Collison and his brother Steve Ferrari to join him. These guys are characters, and honestly, if anyone can do this at ANY age, it'll be them. You can read Vic's Hep Story here.

The Urgency: Scroll down to the bottom of the Long Riders home page, and you will see the following, "Hepatitis C kills more Americans than all other 60 reportable infectious diseases combined. Will you be a bystander or will you be part of the solution? Help us beat hepatitis C by donating to Long Riders." If that doesn't get you to click the Donate Now button, please read on.

What You Can Do: Obviously, donate money, in any amount. If you can't spare it right now, (although even a dollar would be appreciated), there are other ways to support them. You can help raise funds by telling everyone you know about this ride. Follow the Long Riders, via their blog, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you live near the Pacific Crest Trail, perhaps help organize a media event when the Long Riders are in your area. If you don't live nearby, participate from your armchair in their ride. Send them words of encouragement (@LongRidersHepC).

Most importantly, be a part of the solution. Help to raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with hepatitis C. To quote the Long Riders, "Yes, we will reach the Canadian border but the real goal is to end the threat of hepatitis C. Both goals can be achieved."

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