

## 2013 WINTER

### OUR WORLD

Your Mother Liked It Bareback . . . . . 3

### OUR HEALTH

Natural Allergy Remedies . . . . . 4

### OUR DOCTORS

HIV/AIDS Specialists . . . . . 8

### OUR DIRECTORY

Upcoming Activities . . . . . 9

Support Groups . . . . . 10

Bulletin Board . . . . . 11

# Tips on Transitioning from Work to Disability

BY JACQUES CHAMBERS

Many people with a diagnosis such as HIV, a chronic condition that can be progressive in its severity, tend not to look ahead to the possibility of leaving work someday. While this may be emotionally helpful, it can make for a bumpy and stressful time when leaving work becomes necessary.

### Preparing to Leave Work

**Plan.** Once you have a diagnosis or other indication that you may have to stop working at some time in the future, you should do a “Benefit Review” so you will know what benefits are available, what you have to do to become eligible for them, and how much income you will have when you stop working. The earlier in advance you do this review, the greater the possibility of making changes to enhance your benefits when and if you do become disabled. Also, once completed, you will be more comfortable knowing that there is assistance for you when you can no longer work.

If you have benefits through your employer, you should begin first by obtaining a copy of the Summary Plan Descriptions that employers are required to provide all employees. Personnel departments should have them available and you can request them, simply saying something like you are working with a financial planner and he/she needs them. This way, no “red flags” are raised.

Be careful switching to part-time work—Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), an employer must make “reasonable accommodation” for your medical condition to help you continue working. In many cases, however, that accommodation is reduced hours, with accompanying reduced pay. If you have a long term disability (LTD) program from work, the disability

benefits are tied to what you were earning at the time you stopped work. If you reduce your hours, you’ll also reduce your income and that will further reduce any LTD benefits you’re eligible for later. If you reduce your hours too much, you may lose eligibility to all your benefits including health insurance.

### Be careful how you tell your employer.

The best way to tell your employer you have to go on disability is to go to Human Resources and tell them your doctor has directed you to take some time off and ask for the necessary paperwork.

When telling your employer that you are leaving, do not announce that you are leaving permanently and never plan to return, even if that is the case. It is better to preserve your benefits and rights by telling the employer that your doctor is making you take some time off for your medical condition. When asked for how long, you can tell the truth; you don’t know for sure—at least a month or two, no more than twelve weeks, which is how long the employer must save your position and continue your benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act. The employer will tell you what paperwork is needed to process the absence.

### Paperwork

**Copy! Copy! Copy!** Nothing should leave your hands that you don’t have a copy of. Every letter, every completed form, every application. Keep a copy! It is also helpful to copy blank forms before completing them in case there’s an error and you need to start over.

### Check all paperwork before submitting.

Let the forms sit at least overnight and review them again before submitting them. If possible,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# Have Questions? Worried? Need Help?

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### NEWSLETTER

*In memory of Fred Clark, Gilbert Cornilliet,  
Robert Dal Porto, Eric Estrada, Mark Allen-  
Smith, Brian Stott, and Cary Alexander*

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# Your Mother Liked It Bareback

BY MARK S. KING

Whenever a new study of gay men is released showing that we are having bareback sex, the arbiters of sexual conduct among us clutch their pearls and decry this shameful, shocking, murderous behavior. So you can just imagine runaway pearls showering the floor when a recent survey showed that nearly half the users of the gay phone app Grindr engage in unprotected sex.

I really wish that people would put down their smelling salts and try to understand the reasons why. Instead, every time some half-assed study demonstrates what we already know, they stand there in stunned outrage, frozen in their outdated indignation like they've been caught baking bread in Pompeii.

There's nothing new here, except our seemingly endless fascination with gay men behaving in exactly the same way as nearly every other man on this planet.

Maybe those who find bareback sex distasteful believe they are being politically correct, that

their strident judgments about the sex lives of others are in the service of HIV prevention, that criticizing other gay men for acting like human beings will somehow alter instincts that evolution built over millions of years.

Perhaps this is part of our new gay agenda, to demonstrate to straight society that we're just as good at shaming gay men as they are, that we'll gladly be neutered for equal rights and be denied the same pleasures they take for granted, that if they only give us gay marriage we won't talk about the unprotected butt fucking that will happen on the wedding night.

Somehow, we have come to the homophobic conclusion that when gay men engage in the romantic, emotional, spiritual act of intercourse without a barrier we label it psychotic barebacking, but when straight people do it we call it sex.

This double standard is ludicrous. Your mother barebacked. It is a natural and precious act that has been going on, quite literally, since

the beginning of mankind. Abraham (barebacked and) begat Isaac; and Isaac (barebacked and) begat Jacob; and Jacob (barebacked and) begat Judas and his brethren (Matthew 1:2).

Maybe you have the uncanny ability to enjoy sex while your penis is wrapped in latex. That is terrific, really. Please continue. You are using a classic prevention tool, a real golden oldie. Or maybe you and your boyfriend are HIV negative and have the good fortune to be in a committed, monogamous relationship in which you are having sex without condoms. Or perhaps, by whatever Olympian discipline you possess, you are capable of using a condom each and every time you have sex, no matter what. You are to be commended, and you are, regrettably, in the minority.

All of these scenarios are valid and worth replicating whenever possible. They do not, however, represent a superior high ground from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

## Being Alive + Antioch University = Antioch Alive

Being Alive is partnering with Antioch University's LGBT specialization program to offer Mental Health Services at our West Hollywood office.

We have Master's level Psychotherapy trainees offering Individual, Family, Couple, and Group Psychotherapy to anyone who is living with HIV/AIDS. In addition to their LGBT Specialization, they will have also undergone five weeks of classes in HIV Education and Cultural Sensitivity.

Contact Being Alive for more information.

# Natural Allergy Remedies

BY JOANNA LAFORCE, RPH, CGP

Sneezing, runny nose, wheezing, and itchy, watery eyes...yeah, spring's here. Seasonal allergies have the ability to steal the joy of the season and with the mild winter that most of our area experienced, they seem to have come early this year! We all know that allergies are mostly aggravated by the pollen in the air that comes from a variety of trees, grass, flowers and shrubs. Sadly, this often prevents those who suffer from venturing outdoors.

But what if there was a solution?

## Common Prescriptions

Over-the-counter and/or prescription antihistamines are the most common treatment given for seasonal allergy sufferers, but they only block the symptoms—sometimes causing horrible side effects—and they don't really treat the underlying cause.

Learning to resolve the symptoms of seasonal allergies with powerful and effective vintage folk remedies, herbs, essential oils, and working to build a strong immune system are all natural ways that allergy sufferers can find empowerment, relief, and not to mention...save tons of money in the long run!

## Tips for Managing Seasonal Allergies Naturally

**Chinese Medicine.** The focus of Chinese Herbalism is to regulate the body and restore it to its normal function. It treats both the cause and symptoms of the disease. It supports the body's self healing ability, with an extremely low incidence of side effects.

- Immunity Plus—proprietary formula from The Farmacy (The Farm). It contains immune stimulating herbs and mushrooms. Also excellent for taking with chemotherapy/radiation treatment.

- Mega Food—Revitalizes natural defenses with age-defying antioxidants. Made from whole foods and herbs.

- Echinacea—Supports immune functions at onset of seasonal stressors. It maintains a healthy inflammatory response to season stressors.

*These products are available at The Farm in West Hollywood, and The Farmacy Venice and The Farmacy Westwood. Also, see our herbalists at the Westwood Wellness Center in West Hollywood.*

I also recommend that you make a consultation appointment with one of our herbalists. They evaluate and prescribe a custom formula for you with continued monitoring for optimum effectiveness.

**Local, raw honey.** Yum! Who doesn't like the idea of taking a spoonful of honey daily?! Local, raw honey has the greatest ability to reduce allergies or get rid of them all together. If you know what it is that causes your allergies to flare up, your body can build a tolerance to it if you consume local honey from that specific plant source. Our local farmers markets usually have a vendor that sells local honey. Ask them to name the plant source of the honey and purchase the one that causes your symptoms. If they don't have it...it's totally fine, just buy the honey that is produced as locally as possible. It will contain pollen from several plants, thereby providing a broad spectrum coverage. Note: Local, raw honey is generally considered safe to administer to anyone over the age of one. .

**Raw, organic apple cider vinegar.** Taking a tablespoon of raw, organic apple cider vinegar (ACV) every morning—before going outside—works by blocking our body's histamine reaction and it reduces inflammation. Mix 1 tablespoon of ACV with a cup of warm water and a spoonful of local, raw honey and you're good to go. ACV can be found in most grocery stores along with the other vinegars or in a health food store.

**Build your immune system.** There are so many effective ways we can build our immune

# The Young & The

systems, and when it comes to seasonal allergies here are a few that have helped a majority of folks:

- Drink plenty of pure water throughout the day. I have noticed that many allergy sufferers have experienced relief from symptoms almost as soon as they drink two or more glasses of water.
- Eliminate highly processed and sugar-laden junk foods from the diet.
- Eat simple meals, minimally processed, and in as natural a state as possible.
- Switch to raw dairy, as much as possible. If raw dairy is not available to you, reduce your intake of pasteurized dairy products.
- Use probiotics. By eating yogurt, drinking kombucha and taking good-quality probiotic supplements you are sure to get the daily recommendation!
- Be sure to consume lots of organic beans, nuts, seeds, and a variety of fresh fruits and veggies. This benefits your immune system as it will increase your intake of vitamins and minerals such as magnesium, the B vitamins, vitamin A, iron, and vitamin C.

**Support your respiratory system with herbs.** Herbs are an extremely effective, gentle, and natural way to treat seasonal allergies. The number one herb—in my opinion—is the nettle. When taken internally, the nettle leaf works to reduce inflammation and congestion. It can be consumed as a tea or tincture and is considered

safe to use daily throughout the duration of your symptoms.

A simple tea made from nettle leaves is very effective, and really all that is needed. However, you can create your own herbal tea blend with herbs that work together to act as natural antihistamines, anti-inflammatories, and nourishing respiratory system builders. Here's a simple recipe that has been very effective for my patients:

- 4 parts nettle leaf
- 2 parts peppermint leaf
- 2 part alfalfa leaf
- 1 part astragalus root
- 1 part elder flowers
- 1 part licorice root
- 1 part yarrow

To use: Combine all ingredients in an airtight container and store. Infuse one teaspoon of loose leaf tea in eight ounces of water for ten minutes and drink up to three cups daily.

**Essential oils.** Essential oils such as lavender, Melissa (lemon balm), peppermint, blue tansy (or roman chamomile), lemongrass, and eucalyptus are great for relieving allergy symptoms. Diffuse a few drops of essential oils in a humidifier or cold air diffuser. You can also apply essential oils to the feet, wrist, face, and chest by mixing 1 drop in a tablespoon of oil (i.e. olive, coconut, almond, or jojoba). *Note: You may also receive benefits from the essential oils by applying a few drops to the new air filters of your home when replacing them.*

Don't line dry your clothes. At least not outdoors. Line drying your clothes outdoors during times of high pollen count will allow the pollen to collect on your clothing. It may be best to keep your line drying efforts indoors for the spring.

**Homeopathic remedies.** Homeopathic remedies have also proven to be very beneficial in the treatment of seasonal allergies. However, because everyone's issues are so diverse, it's best to see a qualified practitioner for an exact recommendation. Just know that it is a good option. 🌿

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*JoAnna LaForce, RPh, CGP is a Clinical Consultant Pharmacist. She graduated from the University of Southern California and Idaho State University School of Pharmacy in 1975 and is Board Certified in Geriatric Pharmacy. She worked for Kindred Pharmacy Services in Santa Barbara, California, 1994 to 2006. Her duties included review of drug regimens of patients in convalescent hospitals and assisted living centers, interdisciplinary meetings and reviews with physicians, nurses and other health professionals, and education to nursing staff and nurses' aides, social service personnel, and physicians. She has also provided pain management consulting for Hospice patients for the past twenty years. JoAnna is currently Clinical Director of The Pharmacy® West Hollywood, The Pharmacy® Venice and The Pharmacy® Westwood. The Pharmacies are organic medicine centers that provide natural healing products and herbs; including medical cannabis. They are staffed by Licensed Acupuncturists, Herbalists, Massage therapists, and Licensed Nutritionists. She oversees all clinical aspects, including quality control and standards of operation.*

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look them over several times. It is amazing what additional information you will recall and be able to add, especially if your medical condition is one you have had for some time. People frequently forget about symptoms they have when they have lived with them long enough. They also often forget about adjustments and accommodations they have made for their condition over the years.

**Don't let small spaces on the forms scare you.** I'm convinced some claim forms purposely have a tiny amount of space for answers just to keep you off-balance and encourage you not to say much. I don't know of a single carrier or government agency that won't accept additional sheets of information. Simply label "See attached" in the space on the form, and put your full answer on an attached sheet. Make sure you carefully label the question and answer. Make sure you put your name and Social Security number or claim number at the top of every page of every form.

**Don't be too perfect.** If you use a computer to complete your forms and they end up looking very "professional," be sure to explain the time and number of sittings you had to spend getting them to look that good. You may even want to describe how many revisions you had to make and who assisted you with the process, if anyone.

**Track all documents.** Many people send forms and correspondence "Return Receipt Requested." The problem is the signature signed in the mailroom is often unreadable. Sending items Priority Mail allows you to track the packet and having a copy makes it replaceable if lost. When possible, deliver Social Security forms and correspondence to the local Social Security office personally and ask them to date stamp your copy as proof of delivery.

### Phone Calls and Follow-Up

**Don't sit and wait.** Stay involved in the claim process. Contact the analyst and examiner to make sure mailed forms were received. Work with the examiner/analyst and follow up with doctors who haven't submitted their records. This not only reduces the time it takes to process the paperwork, but it helps remind the examiner that you are a person, not just a claim number.

**Maintain a phone log.** Every time you talk to the insurance company or Social Security or your employer or anyone regarding your benefits, keep a written record of the call. Name,

phone number, date and time of call, what was said, outcome or next step and when to follow up again.

**Get it in writing.** The best record is the written record. What you are told by the insurance company over the phone doesn't mean a thing. If they have to put it in writing, chances are they will make sure they are right before writing it down. Try asking something like, "I have trouble remembering things and this is so complicated. Could you put that in writing and send it to me?"

**Talk to the person, not the office.** It's easy to picture monsters and ogres working for the companies and squealing with glee when they refuse your claim (and there are enough like that to be really scary), but these people are also human and just trying to do their jobs. Try to be friendly, and business-like. Understand these people are overworked and handle many claims in addition to yours. Stay calm and don't argue.

**Be generous with compliments.** If the claims representative goes out of his/her way or gives you better than expected service, let them know.

**Play dumb.** You're much more likely to get the attention and advice of a claims representative by playing the helpless, ill, lost-in-the-system role and admitting they know more than you about the process. Demands, orders, and threats won't help your case move any faster, at least not initially.

**Watch what you say on the telephone.** When you call an insurance company or Social Security, you often get the recording, "Your call may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance." That means the phone call is being recorded. Watch what you say, and take notes for your own record. There's no point in threatening legal action, but if warranted, get an attorney. Exhaust all internal appeals processes first though.

**Double-check what you are told.** I'm sorry if this sounds very cynical; I don't mean you should distrust everyone. However, in this case, you can't be too careful. This is your life, your income, your continued health insurance we're talking about, and no one cares about it as much as you do.

People will sometimes give you information off the top of their heads without realizing that the wrong information can cost you money and/or insurance coverage. You're trying to find the answers to surviving in the future; they're try-

ing to get off the phone. It's important that you try to double-check such information.

The process of moving from work to disability is not an easy one. By following these suggestions, you can make the process more organized, less stressful, and easier to follow. It also puts you back in control of the process so you don't feel helpless and at the mercy of the programs you are trying to access.

Oh, and one more thing: do not be afraid to ask for help from family, friends, or a knowledgeable advocate. 

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which to make pronouncements about someone else's choices.

There was an unspoken agreement that gay men made amongst ourselves during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. We accepted that we would use condoms—at the time it was the only “safer sex” option that existed—until whatever time the crisis abated. Many of us believed this contract would be in effect for the rest of lives, if only because we thought we would be dead within a few short years. But none of us could have fathomed that, thirty years later, we would still be held to these strict and oppressive guidelines.

Even then, some of us didn't follow them. One might assume that the cascade of death we experienced would have led to long term behavioral change. In fact, many of us responded to the crisis in a profoundly human way: we found comfort by making love with one another, often without a condom. It was a life affirming gesture, and an enormous “fuck you” to AIDS.

In fact, a 1988 study of gay men showed that almost half of them never used condoms, and most did not use them all of the time. These figures are strikingly similar to the recent Grindr results. Everything old is new again. Or it never went out of style in the first place.

The 1988 study is particularly interesting when you consider how many gay men consider that period a time of great sexual austerity—

and some of them are wishing for a return to those times a bit too ardently. Gay men who witnessed the early AIDS carnage will sometimes say, “If only younger men knew what we went through. If they had seen it, they wouldn't be behaving this way.”

That's sick. I do not wish young gay men could witness the soul crushing things that I did. I worked in the trenches very, very hard so that they might have the option of being apathetic. I prefer their blissful ignorance to burying them.

And make no mistake about it, the number of gay men in the United States dying from AIDS is a small fraction of what it once was. Cigarettes are now killing more people with HIV than the virus itself. HIV/AIDS has become a dangerous but largely manageable disease, and fear tactics that suggest otherwise are being ignored because they simply are not true. Sex is sex, it is affirming and natural, and anyone who wishes to equate unprotected sex to death and disease really needs to get some therapy.

Condom usage will almost certainly continue to decrease in the future because of new tools that have joined the growing list of HIV prevention options. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)—taking medication in advance of sex with an infected person—has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of transmission (and some insurance plans in the United States are covering the cost). Many people living with HIV are limiting sex partners to those who share

their HIV status, known as serosorting. Positive gay men have largely dismissed scary fireside stories of the ultimate boogeyman, the reinfection SuperVirus, who has never materialized.

We also know that when those with HIV have an undetectable viral load the risk of transmission is negligible, so “treatment as prevention” efforts have increased. (A new British study of straight couples showed that an undetectable viral load is more effective in preventing transmission than condoms, and those researchers believe the same will hold true for gay men.)

Gleaming on the horizon are rectal microbicides. These products, currently in development, will come in the form of lubricants or douches that will prevent HIV infection, and they could make the endless debate and judgments about condoms moot, once and for all.

We don't have to do this anymore. We don't have to clobber each other with condom fascism, discredit the value of our sex lives, or promote a singular strategy that doesn't work for everyone. We can accept that gay men are making educated choices to engage in a variety of risk reduction techniques. We can acknowledge that all of these techniques reduce the risk of HIV infection and all of them constitute “safer sex.”

And finally, we can stop pretending that those who remain fixated on condom usage have the moral upper hand.

The emperor has no clothes. And he isn't wearing a rubber, either. 🍌



Transitions is a weekly peer-led support group that meets in a safe and supportive environment at Being Alive. Vocalize your thoughts or concerns about any issues that are prevalent in your life and meet with other HIV+ transgender individuals with whom you can have an open exchange of ideas and strategies for coping with your diagnosis. Peers will provide support and share advice during this life-changing period. Participants in the group will learn about risk reduction, harm reduction and trans-safety from various experts.

# Transitions

Saturdays 10am–noon in the Being Alive Green Room

# HIV/AIDS SPECIALISTS

We invite all HIV/AIDS specialists to mail or e-mail your information to us. Please indicate what insurances you do and do not accept, as well as your address, phone numbers and e-mail.

## MEDICAL DOCTORS

Marcia Alcoloumre, MD  
Dr. Devente, MD  
St. Mary Medical Center  
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Long Beach, CA 90813  
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Accepts most insurance plans: Indemnity and PPO, Medicare and Medi-CAL, and uninsured HIV+ individuals.

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HIV/AIDS specialist. Not accepting new patients currently, but will help new patients navigate the Kaiser system.

Matt Pekerol, MD  
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310.858.0880  
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323.654.2020  
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HIV+ physiotherapist. Accepts most PPO, POS insurance. Specialty areas: HIV issues, depression, abuse, addiction and recovery, relationships, grief.

Erin T. Childs, MA, LMFT  
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Payam GhassemLou, MFT, PhD  
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310.801.2927  
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## BENEFITS COUNSELOR

Jacques Chambers, CLU  
Benefits Consultant and Counselor  
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2658 Griffith Park Blvd, #290  
Los Angeles, CA 90039-2520  
323.665.2595 or 888.739.2595  
www.HelpWithBenefits.com



# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AT BEING ALIVE

Call Being Alive at 323.874.4322. We're located at 7531 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 100, West Hollywood.

## Being Alive Board Meetings

The Being Alive Board of Directors meetings for 2012 will be held monthly. If you would like to attend, call for more information.

## Transitions

**Saturdays • 10:00am–noon**

Transitions is a weekly Peer-led Support Group that will meet in a safe and supportive environment at Being Alive. You'll get the chance to vocalize your thoughts or concerns about any issues that are prevalent in your life and meet with other HIV+ transgender individuals with whom you can have an open exchange of ideas and strategies for coping with your diagnosis. Peers will provide support and share advice during this life changing period. Participants in the group will learn about risk reduction, harm reduction and Trans-Safety from various experts.

## The Young and the Restless

**Thursdays • 7:00–9:00pm**

A new support group for the young and newly poz. All are welcome, but the focus are on the newly diagnosed and under 30. Topics include emotional and physical well-being, risk reduction and disclosure, HIV 101 and basic information, treatment adherence, communication skills, and fellowship. Call Being Alive for more information.

## Psychotherapy

**by appointment**

**10:00am–9:00pm**

Licensed psychotherapy intern provides one-on-one and couples therapy. Call Being Alive for appointment.

## Positively New

**Wednesdays • 7:30–10:00pm**

For newly diagnosed or newly identified HIV+ within the past three years. Get emotional support, discuss medical issues, and topics relevant to a new diagnosis. Facilitated by Brian Risley, lead treatment educator for APLA. Call 213.201.1547.

## Positive Outlook Support Group

**Fridays • 7:00–9:00pm**

All those interested in attending a Being Alive peer support group in the Silver Lake area please contact Being Alive.

## Positive Reactions West

**Wednesdays • 7:00–9:00pm**

At Being Alive. A small drop-in group in a safe, honest place to discuss issues and meet others dealing with HIV. Call Being Alive.

## Ceramics and Pottery

**Call Being Alive for location**

**Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays • 12:00 noon**

Learn ceramics and wheel-throwing. Beginners to advanced are welcome.

## Yoga

**Beginning Yoga**

**Mondays • 2:30pm**

**Tuesdays, Thursdays • 3:00pm**

At Being Alive in the Meditation Room. Call to make an appointment.

**Saturdays • 10:30am**

Call for location.

## Healing Touch

**by appointment**

**Fridays • 10:00am–2:00pm**

Alternative healing by hands-on and energy-based techniques. Call Being Alive for appointment.

## Hypnotherapy

**Thursday**

By Dean L. Williams, CHT. Call 877.667.5844.

## Speaker's Bureau

Spread the word about prevention, treatment, living with HIV/AIDS. For more information, call Colin at 310.739.6504.

## Acupuncture Services

**by appointment**

**Mondays • 1:30–4:30pm**

**Every other Tuesday • 10:00am–1:00pm**

**Wednesdays • 10:30am–5:00pm**

Treatment for a range of conditions including pain management, neuropathy and other side effects, addictions, stress, headaches, and allergies. Call Being Alive for appointment.

## Chiropractic Services

**Fridays • 1:00am–4:00pm**

Back and body adjustments. No appointment necessary. New clients, or clients who have not contracted chiropractic services in more than a year, must come in at noon to fill out paperwork.

# BEING ALIVE SUPPORT GROUPS

Our goal is to provide a safe and confidential space where everyone can express themselves in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

## WEDNESDAY

**Wise Guys** 7:00–9:00pm. Being Alive West Hollywood (Being Alive Green Room). Co-facilitated. A drop-in group for men over 35 in a safe, honest place to discuss issues and meet others dealing with HIV. Call Being Alive for more information.

**Positively New** 7:30–10:00pm. 1300 N Vermont Ave. (Doctor's Building 2nd floor Conference Room). Facilitated by Brian Risley, Lead Treatment Educator for APLA at 213.201.1547. A fairly large support group for those who are newly diagnosed or newly identify HIV+ within the past three years. Get emotional support, discuss medical issues and topics relevant to a new diagnosis.

## THURSDAY

**The Young and the Restless** 7:00–9:00pm. A new support group for the young and newly poz. All are welcome, but the focus are on the newly diagnosed and under 40. Topics include emotional and physical well-being, risk reduction and disclosure, HIV 101 and basic information, treat adherence, communication skills, and fellowship. Call Being Alive for more information.

## FRIDAY

**Positive Outlook Support Group** 7:00–9:00pm. An emotional and social support group in Silverlake area for HIV+ men to discuss current issues and solutions to life with HIV. Contact Being Alive for more information.

## SATURDAY

**Transitions** 10:00am–noon. Transitions is a weekly Peer-led Support Group that will meet in a safe and supportive environment at Being Alive. You'll get the chance to vocalize your thoughts or concerns about any issues that are prevalent in your life and meet with other HIV+ transgender individuals with whom you can have an open exchange of ideas and strategies for coping with your diagnosis. Peers will provide support and share advice during this life changing period. Participants in the group will learn about risk reduction, harm reduction and Trans-Safety from various experts.

## LOCAL RESOURCES

ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights: 213.977.9500 x237

Aid for AIDS: 323.656.1107

AIDS Healthcare Foundation: 888.AIDSCARE

AIDS/HIV Discrimination Unit, LA City Attorney's Office:  
213.978.7758

APLA: 213.201.1600

AIDS Research Alliance: 310.358.2423

AIDS Service Center: 626.441.8495

AIDS Services Foundation/Orange County: 949.809.5700

Asian/Pacific AIDS Intervention Team: 213.553.1830

Being Alive San Diego: 619.291.1400

Beth Chayim Chadashim: 323.931.7023

Bienestar Hollywood: 323.660.9680

Clean Needles Now: 213.483.5366

Common Ground, the West Side HIV Community Center:  
310.314.5480

Congregation Kol Ami: 310.248.6320

CVS Pharmacy: 310.659.9810

Deaf Women Outreach: 323.478.8000 (TTY or voice)

Discount Medical Pharmacy: 323.661.8366

East Valley Community Health Center:

West Covina: 626.919.5724;

Pomona: 909.620.8088

Foothill AIDS Project: 909.482.2066

HALSA: 213.637.1690

Jeffrey Goodman Special Care Clinic (GLCSC):  
323.993.7500

Jewish Family Services HIV/AIDS Program: 323.761.8800

LA Gay and Lesbian Center: 323.993.7400

The Life Group LA: 888.208.8081

Los Angeles Free Clinic: 323.653.1990

Los Angeles Patients & Caregivers Group: 323.882.6033

Minority AIDS Project: 323.936.4949

Narcotics Anonymous Hotline: 800-todayna

National AIDS Hotline: 800.227.8922;  
800.344.7432 (en Español);

800.243.7889 (TTY)

The New Hope Learning Center: 213.251.8474

North East Valley Clinic: 818.988.6335

PAWS (Pets): 213.741.1950

Peer Education Program: 323.651.9888

Project Angel Food: 323.845.1800

Project Inform: 800.822.7422

South Bay Family Health Care Center: 310.318.2521 x236

Spanish Language AIDS Hotline: 800.400.7432

(SIDA) toll-free Southern California only

Tarzana Treatment Center HIV-Mental Health Project:  
818.342.5897

THE Clinic: 323.295.6571

USC AIDS Clinical Trials Unit: 323.343.8288

Valley Community Clinic: 818.763.8836

Van Ness Recovery House: 323.463.4266

WeHoLife.org: 323.860.7323

Wellness Works Community Health Center: 818.247.2062

West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation:  
323.650.8771 x2

Whittier Rio Hondo AIDS Project: 562.698.3850

Women Alive Coalition: 323.965.1564

Zahn Emergency Shelter: 213.438.1619

# COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Notices for this Bulletin Board and the preceding Support Group sections should be submitted to Kevin Kurth via Community Bulletin Board, *% Being Alive* Newsletter, 7531 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, California 90046; or send e-mail to [Kevin@BeingAliveLA.org](mailto:Kevin@BeingAliveLA.org); or send fax to 323.969.8753. Please be concise and indicate if there is a fee. Please also renew notices every six months.

## MORE SUPPORT GROUPS

### BIENESTAR

Bienestar Human Services offers a variety of services and support groups for the Latino community, HIV+ client services, and HIV-negative prevention programs. Call Jorge Diaz at 523.660.9680. 5/2012

### WHITTIER HIV+ GROUP

Whittier Rio Hondo AIDS Project (WRHAP) offers this group for all people with HIV. An open support group. Every other Saturday 10am–noon. For info, call Elizabeth Mendia at 562.698.3850. 6/2008

### SPECTRUM / PASSPORT TO CARE

Various support groups. Yoga: Mondays 10:30am–noon, Building L. Relapse prevention workshop: Tuesdays 10:30am–noon, Building L. Heterosexual support group: Wednesdays 10:30am–noon, Building K. Food pantry: Thursdays 10am–5pm, Building L. Women's support group: Thursdays 11:30am–1pm, Building M. Soul food men's support group: Thursdays 4–5:30pm, Building N. Movie night: first and third Thursdays 6–8:30pm, Building L. Cocaine anonymous: Fridays 10:30am–noon, Building M. Grupo universal: Fridays 5–6:30pm, Building L. For more information call front desk at 323.563.4939. 11/2007

### SOUTH BAY FAMILY HEALTHCARE CENTER

Comprehensive HIV/AIDS social service support—case management, mental health, prevention education, HOPWA, short-term rental assistance. Call Joanne Silva at 310.318.2521 x1422. 11/2007

### SHABBAT LUNCH AND JEWISH HIV SUPPORT GROUP AT CONGREGATION KOL AMI

Come and schmooze and eat with fellow Jewish HIVers at Congregation Kol Ami in West Hollywood. We provide a safe, nurturing Jewish environment to talk about life with HIV, Jewish life, and life in general. 1200 North La Brea Avenue, West Hollywood. Call for time and date of next meeting. Reply in confidence to Rabbi Denise Eger at [rabbid@kolami.org](mailto:rabbid@kolami.org), or 323.606.0996, x100. 12/2006

### APLA SUPPORT GROUPS

The following groups are ongoing and offered through APLA's Mental Health Services: HIV/AIDS Gay Male, HIV/AIDS Heterosexual, Substance Use and HIV, and Mono-lingual Spanish-speaking HIV/AIDS. For information in English and Spanish, call Walter Campos at 213.201.1621. 4/2006

### METH AND GAY MEN

Feeling out-of-control? Having trouble finding intimacy? Promising to quit but using anyway? Worried that you need meth to have hot sex? On-going psychotherapy group meeting weekly for men concerned about crystal meth, sex, and intimacy. Conveniently located in Hollywood, this closed therapy group explores issues and feelings in a safe, confidential setting, Monday, 7–8:30pm. For more information, contact Glen at 323.993.7655, or Andre at 323.860.5804. Sponsored by the LA Gay & Lesbian Center. 2/2006

### SPIRITUAL SUPPORT DROP-IN GROUP

For people living with HIV/AIDS or cancer, or dealing with grief or imprisonment. One-on-one spiritual support, primarily Catholic. Can make inter-faith referrals. For info, call 323.225.4461. 5/2004

### CHURCH OF THE VALLEY HIV+ SUPPORT GROUP

Thursdays, 6:30–8:30pm, Disciples of Christ Church, 6565 Vesper, Van Nuys. 818.786.4070. 5/2004

### COMMON GROUND

HIV/AIDS drop-in support group for women and men, Mondays, 12:30–2pm; free; lunch is served. Gestalt Therapy Group, Thursday nights, 5:30–7pm, actively recruiting members. Women's drop-in group, second and fourth Thursdays of the month, 12:30–1:30pm. Spanish-speaking drop-in group, Wednesdays, 10–11:30am. Call 310.314.5480. 5/2004

### ALTAMED SUPPORT GROUP

For men and women living with HIV/AIDS. Meets Tuesdays from 2–3pm at AltaMed in Pico Rivera. For more information, call 562.949.8717. 12/2003

### POSITIVES IN SOBRIETY

Open AA meeting for people affected by HIV. Meets every Sunday, 6pm. Great Hall in Plummer Park, Vista St., between Fountain and Lexington in West Hollywood. 323.656.0829. 12/2003

### HIV BY THE BOOKS

Open AA meeting. Intimate book study for people dealing with HIV/AIDS issues. Meets every Friday, 7:15pm at Being Alive. 323.656.0829. 12/2003

### FOUND SOBRIETY CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS

7pm. 11321 Camarillo St. (upstairs), North Hollywood, CA 91602. Go to [www.crystalmeth.org](http://www.crystalmeth.org) for more information. 1/2003

### NA HIV+

Thursdays at 8:30pm. HIV+ and gay narcotics anonymous meeting. Members share their experience, strength, and hope that they and others may recover from the disease of addiction. HIV+ focused. Many new-comers at this meeting. 1919 N. Beachwood Dr., Los Angeles. For more information, call 323.850.1624. 6/2002

### MINORITY AIDS PROJECT

Minority AIDS Project sponsors a variety of support groups for people of color. Call 323.936.4949. 9/2000

## GRUPOS Y NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL

### BIENESTAR

Bienestar Human Services offers a variety of services and support groups for the Latino community, HIV+ client services, and HIV-negative prevention programs. Call Jorge Diaz at 523.660.9680. 5/2012

### PROJECT ANGEL FOOD

Project Angel Food es una organización que provee comidas para las personas que viven con VIH/SIDA. Nuestros servicios están disponibles para personas que viven en nuestras áreas de servicio y que están oficialmente diagnosticado con el SIDA o VIH sintomáticos. Para recibir servicios, llame el 323.845.1810. 8/2001

### ALTAMED GRUPOS DE APOYO EN ESPAÑOL

Todos los miercoles de 6–8pm le ofrecemos un grupo para hombres y tambien otro grupo para mujeres. Para mayor informacion: Juan—323.869.5403. 2/2001

## WOMEN'S SERVICES

### T.H.E. CLINIC FOR WOMEN, INC.

Offers specialized services for women living with HIV. Early intervention program, HIV testing. Staff speaks ten languages. Call Nola Thomas for information or appointments: 323.295.3225. 5/2012

### THE SERRA PROJECT/CASA DE LA MADONA Y EL NIÑO

A home for women and children living with AIDS and HIV. RN and MSW case management, medical transportation, bilingual—English/Spanish, family preservation and reunification. Call Martha Aldreta at 323.342.0705. 4/2008

### PROTOTYPES WOMENSCARE

Complete medical treatment, follow-up, and case management, education available at WomensCare Center, Queen of Angels/Hollywood Presbyterian. No fee, childcare available. 1300 N. Vermont, Ste. 401. Call Andrea Jackson 323.662.7420. East LA location: 5427 E. Whittier Blvd., Los Angeles 90022. Call Yolanda Salinas 323.869.5467. 11/2007

### ESCAJEDA WOMEN'S CLINIC

Comprehensive health services for women with HIV/AIDS regardless of ability to pay. General and specialized HIV

health care includes GYN services. Social Worker. Psychiatric services. English/Spanish speaking staff. For info, call 626.744.6140. Pasadena location. 12/2003

## LEGAL SERVICES

### HALSA

A collaborative effort of AIDS Service Center, the L.A. County Bar Barristers, AIDS Project, the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, and Public Counsel. HALSA provides legal assistance in a variety of areas including bankruptcy, benefits, employment, housing, wills, powers-of-attorney to low-income people living with HIV, as well as comprehensive pro bono referrals. For more info, call 213.2637.1022. 4/2006

### INSURANCE

Supplemental health and life insurance, serving our community. Contact Glenn at 818.774.1556 x33, or [Glenn\\_Zorn@us.afac.com](mailto:Glenn_Zorn@us.afac.com). 9/2004

### NOTARY PUBLIC

I live a few blocks from Being Alive in West Hollywood. Services are free if we can arrange a time to meet there. You can also come to my home on Palm Avenue and pay the regular \$10, or I can come to your place in West Hollywood for \$15. Call Michael at 310.659.4299. 2/2002

## MEDICAL SERVICES

### HIV OCULAR SPECIALIST

Lee Dodge, OD. 14429½ Ventura Blvd, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423. 818.783.8750. Fax 818.783.8779. [lee@drdodgeod.com](mailto:lee@drdodgeod.com). [www.drdodgeod.com](http://www.drdodgeod.com). Accepts most PPO plans and Medicare. 6/2008

### NORTHEAST VALLEY HEALTH CORP

Confidential comprehensive medical services for HIV/AIDS provided in English and Spanish at low or no cost in the SF Valley. Call Stefen Ruiz at 818.988.6335. 6/2008

### UCLA CARE CLINIC

The UCLA Care Center conducts clinical research in HIV disease management, new medications, metabolic complications, prevention and therapeutic vaccines, opportunistic infections, AIDS-related cancers and co-infections. Contact Deon Claiborne at 310.557.9062. Provides specialty HIV care to those with private insurance, Medicare, or Medicare and Medi-Cal combined. Contact Mike Marcial at 310.557.2273. 11/2007

### JEFFREY GOODMAN SPECIAL CARE CLINIC

Provides HIV and STD testing, as well as treatment, case management, complementary therapies and AIDS Drug Assistance Program for HIV+ patients. 1625 N. Schrader, Third Floor, Los Angeles 90028. [www.lagaycenter.org](http://www.lagaycenter.org). Call 323.993.7500 for info. 11/2007

### AIM HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

Healthcare for adult-industry members. HIV/STD testing, referrals, counseling, GYN services. For clients diagnosed with HIV/AIDS at AIM Healthcare—free-for-life medication placement. Call 818.981.5681. Also in Woodland Hills: 19720 Venture Blvd., 818.961.0291. 11/2007

### COMPREHENSIVE AIDS RESOURCE EDUCATION PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.)

Offers the following services: Out-patient, non-emergency clinic (sliding scale)—562.624.4999 • Dental center (sliding scale)—562.624.4949 • Testing/outreach (no charge)—562.624.4900 • AIDS drug assistance program (no charge)—562.624.4944 • Mental health program and nutritional counseling (no charge)—562.624.4914 • Case management / social services (no charge)—562.624.4900 • Family services program—562.624.4918. Located at 411 E. 10th St., Suite 107, Long Beach, CA 90813 (inside St. Mary Medical Center campus). 11/2007

# COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

## ALTIMED HEALTH SERVICES

Comprehensive medical treatment for people with HIV/AIDS. In addition to medical treatment, we provide case management, support groups, and HIV testing. To make an appointment to see a physician, please call 323.869.5548. 11/2007

## LAGUNA BEACH COMMUNITY CLINIC

Treats qualified clients for a low fee. Two HIV specialists accept Medical and Medicare. 362 3rd St., Laguna Beach, CA 92651. 949.494.0761. 11/2007

## FREE RAPID HIV AND STD TESTING

At The SPOT, 745 N. San Vicente Blvd., West Hollywood, southwest corner of Santa Monica and San Vicente. Tuesday-Friday, 1-7pm, 323.993.7440. If you are experiencing STD symptoms, call 323.993.7575 between 11:30am-2:30pm to schedule an appointment. 11/2007

## VALLEY COMMUNITY CLINIC, NORTH HOLLYWOOD

Offering free, anonymous HIV counseling service and testing Mondays 4-7:30pm, Tuesdays 2-7:30pm, Thursdays 12-3:40pm, and Saturdays 11am-4:30pm. Contact Walter Abb 818.763.8836. HIV case management everyday. Medical outpatient services for people with HIV. ADAP enrollment. For interview call 818.301.6334. www.valleycommunityclinic.org. 11/2007

## AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

AHF Clinics in Hollywood, Downtown, Sherman Oaks, the Westside, Upland, Lancaster, and West Adams provide care to people with HIV/AIDS regardless of ability to pay. No one ever turned away. Free HIV testings at our Out-of-the-Closet thrift stores. Call 800.AHF.2101. 10/2002

## ANDREW ESCAJEDA CLINIC

Comprehensive health services for adults with HIV/AIDS, regardless of ability to pay. ADAP enrollment site and psychiatric services. Open to all HIV-infected, even if receiving medical care elsewhere. Pasadena location. Call 626.744.6140. 8/2002

## TARZANA TREATMENT CENTER

Provides residential rehabilitation and medical detoxification programs for people with HIV/AIDS. Call 818.996.1051 x40. HIV outpatient clinic, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10am-6pm. Call 818.342.5897. 9/2000

## USC AIDS CLINICAL TRIALS UNIT

Free clinical trials for people with HIV/AIDS. Located at 5P21, Rand Schrader Clinic, 1300 N. Mission Rd., Room 349, L.A. For info, call 323.343.8288. 9/2000

## METHADONE TREATMENT FOR HIV+ PEOPLE

If you are HIV+ and opiate-dependent, Western Pacific Rehab offers free out-patient methadone treatment at conveniently located sites. Call 800.223.3869. 9/2000

## WELLS HOUSE HOSPICE, LONG BEACH

A home-like environment serving Long Beach and Orange County. Volunteers always welcome. Contact Ron Morgan at 562.435.9363. 9/2000

## LA COUNTY RAND SHRADER 5P21 HIV CLINIC

Provides comprehensive HIV care; services available in English and Spanish. Call 213.343.8255. 9/2000

## T.H.E. CLINIC, INC.

HIV/AIDS testing, treatment, counseling, family planning, other services. For more information call 323.295.6571. 9/2000

## PHARMACY SERVICES

### EDDIE'S PHARMACY

As your community pharmacy, we are committed to provide the best service possible. Getting to you know and your individual needs is an integral part of that commitment. Small enough to care; large enough to meet your needs. Call 310.358.2400. 1/2006

### ALL-IN-ONE PHARMACY

For all your pharmacy needs. Adherence tools and delivery provided free of charge. Treatment educators available for any questions you have. Most insurance accepted. Call toll-free: 866.255.6663. 11/2005

## MOMS PHARMACY

The original adherence pharmacy. Services include free delivery, pager notification, and optional MOMS Paks medication packets, the ultimate adherence tool. For more information, visit www.momspharmacy.com, or call 866.993.6337. 8/2005

## PERSONAL SERVICES

### TRUE NORTH MESSAGE

Swedish circulatory massage. Tim Maloney, Certified Massage Technician. APSB. 818.244.3029. 818.726.9480 (cell). shaktim2001@hotmail.com. 1/2006

### SPORTS MASSAGE

Deep tissue, soft touch, and Reiki therapy. Discount for HIV+. I've worked on athletes for over five years. Call Wayne at 562.235.8716 and mention this ad. 12/2005

### COUNSELING

Payam Ghassemlou, PhD, MFT, gay male counselor. 310.801.2927. Sandplay Therapy—a fun, creative, and healing process to connect to your psyche's self-healing powers. 9/2004

### RESIDENTIAL DRUG TREATMENT

Live-in drug treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. For info, call Robyn at 818.985.8323. 2/2002

### MASSAGE BY JEFFREY

Therapeutic touch at a discount for people living with HIV/AIDS. Contact Jeffrey at jjeffreys4@aol.com, or call 310.770.7515. 10/2001

### PROJECT ANGEL FOOD

Project Angel Food's agency delivers nutritious meals to individuals with a formal diagnosis of AIDS or symptomatic HIV disease living in our delivery area. To start free meal delivery service, please call Client Services at 323.845.1810. 8/2001

### FREE GROCERIES

Food and personal care items are provided to PWAs. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 10am-1pm. For more information, call Imani Unidos Food Pantry, 323.754.2320. 5/2001

### LOW INCOME HOUSING FOR PWAs

1-, and 2-bedroom housing wait list. Contact West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, 8285 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 3, West Hollywood, or call 323.650.8771, x2. 1/2001

### 50% MASSAGE DISCOUNT

Full hour Swedish massage. Legit. \$25. Designed for financially challenged HIV+ folk who are looking for a way to afford regular massage. Call Bruce at 323.660.5358. 9/2000

## MISCELLANEOUS

### HOLLYWOOD MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

We are accepting new HIV+ clients who are seeking individual or couples counseling. HIV+ clients may obtain services without any insurance, although Medi-CAL and Medicare are accepted. 1224 N. Vine St., Los Angeles 90038. Contact Chris Bridge, MSW, at 323.769.7668. 5/2012

### ALLEGRIA HOUSE SHELTER

Assist families, and couples (gay or straight) living with AIDS. Sober living program. Contact Julie Lewis at 323.454.4200. 11/2007

### CHOICES RECOVERY SERVICES

Has homes in Long Beach and Los Angeles, providing clean, comfortable, structured, drug- and alcohol-free living environments for men, women, straight, gay, HIV+, and dual-diagnosed individuals. Please call us for further information at 562.930.0565. www.choicesoflongbeach.com 11/2007

### ZAHN EMERGENCY SHELTER

Welcomes singles and families with open arms to our sober living program. Priority is given to referrals living with HIV/AIDS. Referrals only. Please call 213.438.1619. 8/2006

### MCINTYRE HOUSE

A non-profit residential substance abuse recovery and sober living program for men. Low-cost medical care and food provided. Contact Ed at 323.662.0855. 12/2004

### TEENS REACH TEENS

Peer Education Program of L.A. offers educators to lead discussions on HIV/AIDS prevention in schools, group homes, and youth agencies. Call Wendy at 323.651.9888. 8/2002

### HELPLINE FOR DEAF PEOPLE WITH HIV

A unique service run by HIV+ deaf people, providing referrals to other deaf and hard-of-hearing people with HIV/AIDS. Contact Emmett Haggen at 323.550.4258 (TDD) or 323.550.4255 (fax). 9/2001

### AIDS EDUCATION/SERVICES FOR THE DEAF

Provides education to schools as well as one-on-one meetings and interpreters to Ryan White-funded HIV/AIDS services and testing with no charge to the service providers. Call 323.550.4250 (TDD/voice). Fax: 323.550.4244. 9/2001

### HIV/AIDS MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Common Ground offers mental health services to HIV+ residents of Los Angeles who cannot afford to pay. Call Mark Fairfield, LCSW, Director of Mental Health, at 310.314.5480. 4/2002

### CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS INFO LINE

12-step program offering a 24-hour information hotline at 213.488.4455. 9/2000

### AID FOR AIDS: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Aid for AIDS provides financial assistance to people with HIV/AIDS. Help with pharmaceuticals, nutrition, monthly bus passes, rent, health insurance payments, utilities. For more info, call 323.656.1107. 9/2000

Need something to do Friday night?  
**Join Positive Outlook**  
for social activities and community participation

Friday nights 7-9 4607 Prospect Street

Call facilitator John Balma at Being Alive for more info.