

# Wellness Notes

October, November, December 2010

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE WRIGHT HOUSE WELLNESS CENTER

## AIDS Walk Austin

Gregory W. Golston

AIDS Walk Austin will be held on Sunday, October 17th, at Austin City Hall Plaza, 301 W. Cesar Chavez Street, located between Guadalupe & Lavaca Street. Sign-in begins at 12:30pm, opening ceremonies at 1:30pm and the Walk will start at 2:00pm. The Walk is almost a 5K, (about 3.1 miles long) and will wind through downtown Austin, taking about an hour to complete.

We will walk to honor, remember, and to raise funds to address AIDS in our community. There are an estimated 6,000 people living with HIV and AIDS in Central Texas. About 20 percent of those 6,000 are unaware of their status.

The money raised from the Walk benefits AIDS Services of Austin and the fundraising teams of Austin's other outstanding AIDS service and education providers. *The Wright House Wellness Center is one of those providers.*

AIDS Walk Austin is the last event for the week long *Austin Red Week*. Austin Red Week promotes HIV and AIDS awareness in Central Texas and includes many ways for you to participate.

**Thursday, September 30th** - Walk Kick-Off Party, Whole Foods, 6:00 - 7:30 pm.

**Tuesday, October 12th** - Huston-Tillotson University Disability Fair, 11:30am to 1:00pm.

**Friday, October 15th** - National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Hispanic and Latinos account for 18 percent of people living with HIV and AIDS in the United States. Stay tuned for events to commemorate this day.

**Sunday, October 17th** – 23rd Annual AIDS Walk at Austin City Hall.

During the week, several buildings will be 'going red' to promote HIV awareness: Austin City Hall, Dell Children's Medical Center, and The Monarch.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display in public community spaces throughout the city, providing the opportunity to remember those we've lost, honor those living with HIV, and celebrate a hopeful future. The six quilt panels at Bass Concert Hall will be on display from October 1 to November 1.

To learn more about Austin Red Week or AIDS Walk Austin, please visit: [http://www.asaustin.org/site/PageServer?pagename=walk\\_home](http://www.asaustin.org/site/PageServer?pagename=walk_home)

## In this issue . . .

World AIDS DAY .....	(pg 2)
Wright Down to It .....	(pg 7)
When to Tell a Date You're HIV Positive.....	(pg 3)
State Fair Word Search and Crossword .....	(pg 4)
The Benefits of Walking.....	(pg 4)
Reiki Defined .....	(pg 5)
Latino AIDS Awareness Day .....	(pg 6)
Summer Soiree Recap .....	(pg 2)
HIV Testing in Texas Prisons.....	(pg 7)
JINGLE BELL JUBILEE.....	Insert

## 2011 CulinART Gala Sponsorship and Auction Items Needed

Help us help the community. The Wright House Wellness Center is seeking CulinART Gala event sponsorships and auction item donations. Call or email Leah Graham at 467-0088 or [leah@thewrighthouse.org](mailto:leah@thewrighthouse.org) for more information.

*Proceeds from CulinART benefit all programs and services of The Wright House Wellness Center.*

### Hill Country Ride for AIDS

April 30th, 2011

<http://www.hillcountryride.org>

Join Team Wright House as a Rider or Crew Member

### Executive and Disease Management Program Offices

4301-B N IH-35 Austin, TX 78722

512/467-0088

Toll Free 1-888-381-5180

Fax: 512-467-0829

### Volunteer Services and Disease Prevention Program Offices

8101 Cameron Rd., Ste.105, Austin, TX 78754

512-236-8901

Fax: 512-236-0365

[www.thewrighthouse.org](http://www.thewrighthouse.org)

## Upcoming Events . . .

**10/3** – United Court of Austin's *Queen of the Night Cabaret*, El Sol y La Luna, 600 E 6th S.

**10/05** – *Chocolates for Charity* benefitting WHWC, 7:00 - 9:00 pm, Charlie's Austin, 1301 Lavaca

**10/9** – United Court of Austin's *INVESTITURE XVII, "THE BLACK AND WHITE BALL: AN EVENING OF GLITZ AND GLAMOUR,"* Rusty Spurs, 405 E. 7th St., 7:00 pm

**10/16** – *Macy's Shop for a Cause*, WHWC volunteers will be at Highland Mall selling coupons, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

**10/17** – *AIDS Walk Austin*, Austin City Hall Plaza, 301 W. Cesar Chavez Street (between Guadalupe & Lavaca Streets), 12:30 pm - Sign-In Opens, 1:30 pm - Opening Ceremonies, 2:00 pm - AIDS Walk Step-Off

**10/20** – *WHWC Volunteer Orientation*, 8101 Cameron Rd., Ste. 104, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

**11/2** – *Chocolates for Charity* benefitting WHWC, 7:00 - 9:00 pm, Charlie's Austin, 1301 Lavaca

**11/17** – *WHWC Volunteer Orientation*, 8101 Cameron Rd., Ste. 104, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

**12/17** – *Jingle Bell Jubilee*, MCC Freedom Oaks, 8601 South 1st St., Client Reception - 6:30 pm, Community Show - 8:00 pm

## World AIDS Day

Juliana Gonzales

Held on December 1st every year since 1988, *World AIDS Day* is dedicated to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, remembering those who have lost their lives to this pandemic, and celebrating and honoring the lives of those currently living with the disease. The global theme this year is 'Universal Access and Human Rights' - emphasizing the continued need to fight for universal access to prevention, care and treatment as a basic human right. While great progress has been made in the fight against HIV, ongoing commitment is necessary to ensure that universal access is achieved.

23% more Texans are living with HIV today than just five years ago. In 2008, there were over 63,000 Texans living with HIV/AIDS - this means that 1 in 387 Texans are HIV+. While HIV doesn't discriminate, portions of our community are disproportionately affected. While Black Texans only make up 11% of the population, they represent 38% of people in Texas with HIV/AIDS -- this means that 1 in 118 Black Texans are HIV+. Access to quality medical care and treatment can help ensure a longer, healthier life but far too many people don't have that access, or wait too late to seek care. 1 in 3 HIV+ Texans are diagnosed with AIDS within one year of their initial diagnosis because they present so late to care. Early HIV diagnosis is crucial. When people with HIV are diagnosed early, treatment works better and there are more chances to

prevent further spread of HIV.

World AIDS Day gives us the opportunity to not only celebrate and remember the lives of those who have died of this disease but to take action and raise our voices to advocate for those who are currently fighting this disease. It is our responsibility to ensure that everybody has equal access to care and treatment, to actively work towards removing the stigma attached to this disease that keeps so many people from accessing care, and to educate our communities so that everyone knows the facts about HIV/AIDS and how it can be prevented. Access for all to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is a critical part of human rights. Stop AIDS. Keep the promise.

One way you can ensure continued access to HIV/AIDS treatment and supportive care is to get active and get involved. The **Austin Area Comprehensive HIV Planning Council's** mission is to develop and coordinate an effective and comprehensive community-wide response to HIV/AIDS. Make your voice and the voices of others heard. For more information call (512) 974-2615 or go to: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/hivcouncil/>.

Information gathered from [www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd/info/edmat/HIVAIDSinTexas.pdf](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd/info/edmat/HIVAIDSinTexas.pdf)



## Summer Soiree 2010

Mark Johansen

A great time was had by all at this year's Summer Soiree held Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Kleberg Hall. Clients, volunteers, staff and Board Members gathered to celebrate and socialize during the annual summer event. Thanks to the contributions of those attending, there was much food to choose from. With the donation of ice cream from Kerbey Lane we were able to make sundaes with the several types of toppings that contributed by WHWC volunteers.

After the meal, clients won prizes during the Bingo tournament. Prizes ranged from dinners for two at local restaurants to a 2-night weekend stay with breakfast at The Staybridge Suites Hotel at the Arboretum.

Be sure to read upcoming newsletters for other events for you to enjoy. Our next event will be Jingle Bell Jubilee on Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>!

## Winter Vegetable and Bean Soup with Orzo

Yield: Makes 4 servings

[www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)

### Ingredients:

#### **Pesto:**

2 cups (packed) fresh basil leaves  
1/2 cup drained canned diced tomatoes  
3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
3 garlic cloves, peeled

#### **Soup:**

2 large leeks (white and pale green parts only), chopped  
2 medium carrots, peeled, diced  
1 6-ounce white-skinned potato, peeled, diced  
3 tablespoons water  
8 cups canned vegetable broth  
1/2 cup orzo (rice-shaped pasta)  
6 ounces green beans, trimmed, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
1 15-ounce can cannellini (white kidney beans), rinsed, drained  
1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper

2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese

### Preparation:

**For pesto:** Puree all ingredients in processor. Season with salt and pepper. (Pesto can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.

#### **For soup:**

Combine first 4 ingredients in heavy large pot. Cover and cook over medium-low heat until vegetables are almost tender, stirring occasionally for about 8 minutes. Add broth; bring to boil. Stir in orzo; boil uncovered until orzo is almost tender, stirring often, about 12 minutes. Add green beans; reduce heat and simmer until beans are tender, about 6 minutes. Stir in cannellini and crushed pepper; simmer until heated through, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Divide pesto among 4 bowls. Ladle soup over pesto; swirl to blend. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons cheese.

### Nutrition Information:

Per serving: calories, 353; total fat, 12 g; saturated fat, 2 g; cholesterol, 6 mg.

## 'When do I tell someone I'm dating I am HIV positive?'

Monica Perras

"Life is meant to be shared with someone you love" (Beram, 2010). But, usually the first step in finding love is dating. The idea of dating brings to mind the excitement of meeting someone new, thinking of him or her all the time, and feeling anxious about another date. Unfortunately, HIV-positive individuals may believe that dating is no longer an option for them; but this couldn't be farther from the truth.

In fact, one of the common myths surrounding HIV dating is that, once diagnosed, you must give up any chance of meeting your special someone (Beram, 2010).

Meeting new people to date is still an option - there are plenty of dating sites available to meet other HIV-positive individuals (a recommended site is <http://www.hivandsingle.com>, which is completely free) - so you're not alone. Additionally, being HIV-positive doesn't mean you cannot date HIV-negative people, it just means you must take precautions and be honest about your status. So, we may ask ourselves the question: when can I tell someone I'm dating that I am HIV-positive?

While preparing for this article, I found some good recommendations related to the right time (which there really isn't ever a "right time") to tell someone you're dating about your HIV-positive status, here are few helpful suggestions:

**Kiss and Tell** - go on a few dates before disclosing your HIV status. This will allow you to wait and see if the relationship is going to get serious before disclosing. If the relationship stalls, your status was not disclosed needlessly. In other words, people who kiss and tell feel this option is best because it limits the number of people who become aware of their HIV diagnosis (Beram, 2010).

When disclosing, think about how you would like to have the information presented to you, such as early in the dating process, say over coffee; while walking in the park; or in a bedroom after a long passionate kiss? Like nothing else that you could bring up during a conversation, revealing your HIV status is going to force a decision on the part of your date. By bringing up your status early in the relationship, you give your date time to consider both the emotional and health risks he or she is willing to take (Mancilla, 2004).

When and if an individual decides to tell about his or her status often depends on how they believe the person will react. If it seems like the person will be accepting of our status, then we're more likely to tell, or to tell sooner. However, if an individual *feels* he or she will be rejected or experience some other negative reaction, that person may either consider not telling or actually not tell at all. An individual's approach also hinges on how vulnerable he or she is willing to feel and how much he or she is willing to risk in the relationship. That said, I do not believe that it is ever acceptable to trick or harm anyone (Johnson, 2010).

Disclosure can play itself out in a variety of ways. You can share your status before you meet your date in person, such as over the Internet, or in a print personal ad; after a few preliminary dates when you know you'd like to pursue the relationship further (Mancilla, 2004).

Dr. Michael Mancilla points out in a study by researcher Daniel Schnell, "Men's Disclosure of HIV Test Results to Male Primary Sex Partners," an overwhelming majority (82%) of the HIV-positive men who revealed their status to their partner "reported that the relationship remained 'as strong as ever' after six months." On the other hand, "most of (continued on p. 7)

**State Fair**

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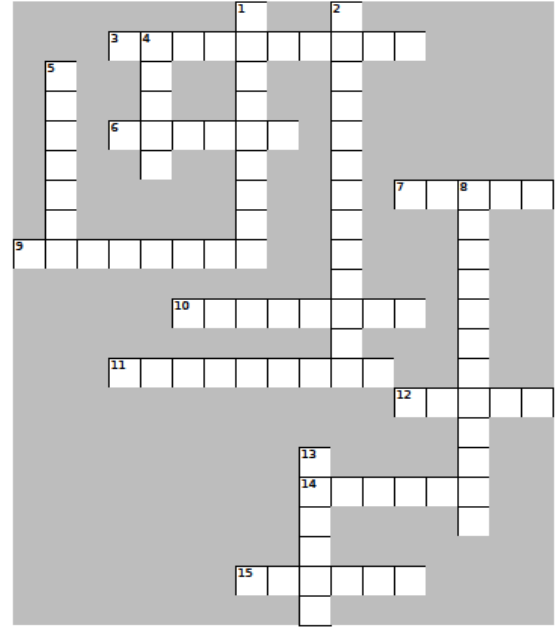
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 Dust  
 Ferris Wheel

Fun House  
 Games  
 Hot Dogs  
 Livestock  
 Midway  
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Popcorn  
 Prizes  
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 Rodeo  
 Tents  
 Tickets



**Fall**



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Across</b>                              | <b>Down</b>   |
| 3 They protect the crops                   | 1 Fall starts in this month                                     |
| 6 These change colors                      | 2 A sweet drink for a cold night (2 words)                      |
| 7 Where you go to pick a pumpkin           | 4 An apple drink that warms you up                              |
| 9 Fall ends in this month                  | 5 This lights up the night at the end of homecoming festivities |
| 10 Favorite Fall sport                     | 8 November's holiday  |
| 11 The day the ghosts and goblins come out | 13 A common yard chore  |
| 12 The air is cool and _____               |   |
| 14 Another name for Fall _____             |   |
| 15 Autumn prepares us for this season      |   |



**The Benefits of Walking**

Maudie Roberts, RN

Walking may be the perfect form of exercise. It's cheap, it's easy, and it can lift your mood and prevent heart disease. The most important things to have are comfortable clothing and shoes and a big thumbs up from your doctor. If the Texas heat is on or you plan to walk longer than 30 minutes, water is very important, too.

While a nice stroll around the block isn't a bad place to start, getting the heart rate up is key. For the most benefits, 2 ½ hours (or 150 minutes) of walking at a moderate pace every week is a good goal. (A good way to know you're walking at a moderate pace if you can hold a conversation without struggling.)

You Mean Exercise Can Be Fun? If exercise is fun, sticking with an exercise plan doesn't feel like a chore. Here are a few ideas for getting and staying motivated:

- Make it a date – Walk with a friend or loved one. You both benefit.
- Try a change of scenery – Take a walk in a park, a historic neighborhood, or the mall (a great place to go when the weather's bad).
- Take your favorite tunes – Pick some music with a nice beat
- Reward yourself – Set a walking goal, like 5 days a week for a month. Once you hit your goal, celebrate. Buy a new pair of shoes, download a new song, or go watch a movie.

## Reiki Defined

By Kevin Davis

### *Description:*

The Practice - The practice of Reiki has been around since the early 1900's. It is a Japanese stress reduction and relaxation practice that promotes healing. It was discovered by Dr. Mikao Usui. He believed that it was possible (from studying many different religious texts), to heal oneself or others by laying hands on the body. The means to do this came to him on a mountain top during a moment of enlightenment. The practice has continued to grow and spread worldwide since its' beginning.

The Energy – Reiki is the Japanese word for Universal Life Force Energy. All living things have this necessary energy. It is what animates all living things. Reiki is spiritually guided, meaning it is guided by a higher source, working in your best interest. It only works on your behalf. It doesn't go against your will, so it can't be forced on you. The energy is guided where it is needed and it is never harmful.

### *Benefits:*

Reiki has a mental, physical, and emotional effect. It is a versatile energy form that works well alone, but is even better when combined with other methods of healing.

Mentally it reduces stress and provides relaxation. It also works to correct bad habits and addictions.

Physically it strengthens the immune system and promotes healing. Reiki assists in healing all forms of disease.

Emotionally it removes traumas. It removes the blocks from emotional scars of the past and also improves self confidence and spiritual awareness.

### *Application:*

When you receive a Reiki treatment, the practitioner draws down life force energy and channels that energy thru his/her body to your body. The energy enters through the crown of the head and travels down to the navel chakra. It builds up there and is released through the hands. It can also be released through the eyes, mouth and feet, which are more advanced techniques.

Once the energy leaves the practitioners' hands, it goes where it is needed. The client feels tingling all over the body and a sense of relaxation.

The giving of Reiki is traditionally done by laying hands on someone, but can also be done from a distance with the help of symbols. These symbols are used to activate and focus the energies. These treatments are just as affective as hands on treatments.

There are three levels to Reiki: Levels 1, 2 and 3 also known as Reiki Master or Teacher. In each level, the Reiki energy increases and more healing takes place. In the second level, the practitioner is taught to send the Reiki energy to distant

locations with the use of symbols. At the master level, healing takes place on a grander scale and techniques are taught to provide healing continuously for days to clients.

Reiki is a great healing modality that is simple to learn, apply and offers so many benefits. **WHWC offers free Reiki to clients. Call 236-8901 for more information.**



### **When do I tell... (from p. 3)**

the men who did not reveal their test results to their main partner reported being 'single' after six months."

Mancilla believes that sharing your status early in a relationship instills a confidence that can facilitate intimacy, or at the very least a belief that you are an honest person. Thus, the honesty points you gain by disclosing early on may or may not move you from the coffee house to the bedroom, but it may encourage a prospective partner at least to keep calling. Overall, with a sensitive topic like HIV, honesty is important. It is understandable that likely you may fear the rejection that may come with disclosing your HIV status to a prospective partner, as well as fear the judgments and stereotypes that come along with an HIV diagnosis. But disclosing your status can potentially prevent a lot of issues later on and decrease risk of losing someone because you weren't open. In my opinion, if you have met or meet someone special and you fear that telling him or her about your status will ruin your only shot at a relationship - if they are unable embrace you just as you are - move on, you are worth seeking the happiness you deserve!

Beram, M. (2010), How to Date with HIV, HIV Dating Tips For Positive Singles | eHow.com. [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2324489\\_hiv-dating-tips-positive-singles.html#ixzz10QgSIQGD](http://www.ehow.com/how_2324489_hiv-dating-tips-positive-singles.html#ixzz10QgSIQGD)

Johnson, V. (2010). Disclosure Etiquette, Part 1: Do I Have to Kiss and Tell? Black AIDS Institute. <http://www.thebody.com/content/living/art55626.html>

Mancilla, M. (2004). Tell and Kiss: Dating and Disclosure. Body Positive. <http://www.thebody.com/content/living/art30896.html>

\*Additional Dating Resources: <http://www.positivepersonals.com> and <http://www.livingpositive.com> both allow you to do geographical searches by state or internationally, as well as view pictures and profiles of other positive (gay and straight) individuals looking to connect. For more information and tips visit: <http://www.hivandrelationships.com>.

## National Latino AIDS Awareness Day - Theme for 2010: 'Save a Life, It May Be Your Own. Get Tested for HIV'

NEW YORK, June 8 /PRNewswire-US Newswire/ -- The National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD) is a national social marketing campaign that engages the Hispanic/Latino community in HIV awareness and promotes testing, prevention and education. NLAAD takes place annually on October 15th, the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month and was initiated as a response to the HIV/AIDS crisis within Hispanic/Latino communities in the U.S. and its territories. In the past seven years, organizations participating in NLAAD have provided HIV testing to over 70,000 individuals nationwide.

This year's theme – ***Save a Life, It May be your Own. Get Tested for HIV*** – speaks to the critical role HIV testing and prevention education plays due to the late testing realities faced by Hispanic/Latino communities. Data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) shows that **Hispanics/Latinos progress to AIDS faster than any other racial or ethnic group with 42% being diagnosed with AIDS within 12 months after learning of their positive HIV status** compared to 34% late diagnosis among white non Hispanic and 35% among blacks.

"We believe that personalizing the message of HIV testing and prevention will resonate in our communities. Hispanics/Latinos face so many health challenges including discrimination, language barriers, social stigma, poverty and as of late, tremendous anti-immigration sentiment. Through CENSUS 2010, we are reminded that Hispanic/Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic population and NLAAD's vision is to develop and strengthen healthy communities," stated Guillermo Chacon, President of the Latino Commission on AIDS.

Hispanics/Latinos represent 15.3% of the U.S. population, but account for 22.3% of the new HIV infections in the U.S. including Puerto Rico, according to the CDC. On a national level, this epidemic is nothing short of a public health crisis. NLAAD's strength lies in raising awareness at the national, regional level but also working in the local communities to provide testing and connecting people to care to some of our most vulnerable populations.

NLAAD recognizes the Office of Minority Health and Dr. Garth N. Graham, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health in the Office of Minority Health at the Department of Health and Human Services for their leadership and support.

Nationally you can obtain more information about HIV testing or find a testing location near you by calling the CDC hotline at 1-800-232-4636 or by visiting <http://www.nlaad.org/>.

**About NLAAD:** *National Latino AIDS Awareness Day* was developed by the Latino Commission on AIDS and the Hispanic Federation in partnership with community based organizations, people living with HIV/AIDS, state and regional health departments and others. Partnerships with the media, elected officials, civic and religious leaders, foundations, celebrities and the health care system are forged to raise awareness among Latinos in the United States and territories. To find out more about NLAAD visit <http://www.nlaad.org/>

SOURCE National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD) <http://www.nlaad.org/>

## Most prison inmates with HIV do not receive appropriate treatment immediately following release

Published: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 Health & Medicine

Approximately 80 percent of HIV-infected Texas prison inmates did not fill an initial prescription for antiretroviral therapy within 30 days of their release from prison, potentially increasing their risk for harmful health consequences because of an interruption of treatment, according to a study in the February 25 issue of *JAMA*. "The U.S. prison system has become an important front in the effort to treat and control the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, serving as the principal screening and treatment venue for thousands of individuals with or at high risk for HIV infection who have limited access to community-based health care. Many inmates are offered HIV testing for the first time while incarcerated, and three-quarters of inmates with HIV infection initiate treatment during incarceration," the authors write.

Because the majority of former inmates are without private or public health insurance for the first several months after release, accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART) in a timely manner represents a challenge. "Those who discontinue ART at this time are at increased risk of developing a higher viral burden, resulting in greater infectiousness and higher levels of drug resistance, potentially creating reservoirs of drug-resistant HIV in the general community," they add. The extent to which HIV-infected inmates experience ART interruption following release from prison is unknown.

Jacques Baillargeon, Ph.D., of the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, and colleagues conducted a study in the nation's largest state prison system to determine the proportion of HIV-infected inmates who filled a prescription for ART medication within 60 days following their release from prison. The study included all 2,115 HIV-infected inmates released from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice prison system between January 2004 and December 2007 who were receiving ART before release.

Among the entire study group, an initial prescription for ART medication was filled by 115 (5.4 percent) of the former inmates within 10 days of release, by 375 (17.7 percent) within 30 days, and by 634 (30.0 percent) within 60 days. The authors found that Hispanic and African American inmates were less likely to fill a prescription within 10 days and 30 days compared with non-Hispanic whites. Inmates with an undetectable viral load were more likely to fill a prescription than inmates with a detectable viral load at release. Inmates released on parole were more likely to fill a prescription within 30 days and 60 days than inmates with a standard, unsupervised release. Inmates who received formal assistance in completing an AIDS Drug Assistance Program application were more likely to fill a prescription than inmates who received no such assistance.

"In this 4-year study of HIV-infected inmates released from the nation's largest state prison system, we found that only 5 percent of released inmates filled a prescription for ART medications soon enough (i.e., within 10 days after release) to avoid treatment interruption," the authors write. In all of the subgroups examined, at least 90 percent of the former inmates experienced a treatment interruption; more than 70 percent had a treatment interruption that lasted at least 30 days, and more than 60 percent had a treatment interruption that lasted at least 60 days.

"These exceedingly high rates of treatment interruption suggest that most inmates face significant administrative, socioeconomic, or personal barriers to accessing ART when they return to their communities. Future prospective and in-depth qualitative studies are needed to more rigorously examine these barriers. Adequately addressing a public health crisis of this scale and complexity will require carefully coordinated efforts between academic institutions, the criminal justice system, and public health agencies," the researchers write. "In particular, greater coordination between state and local agencies, health care institutions, and community-based organizations is needed to reduce this high rate of treatment interruption among newly released inmates."

Source: JAMA and Archives Journals



## Wright Down to It

WHWC's advice columnist answers your most pressing questions

**Q: I'm single and have no interest in being in a relationship, but my friends just don't get it. They insist on playing "matchmaker" whenever they get a chance. Why do they keep trying to hook me up? Why does society think it's best for me to be in a relationship?**

A: When you consider the fact that people used to get married and have kids as soon as possible, and that this was the only accepted path, it looks like we've come a long way. These days, single people have kids, many couples live together before getting married or never marry at all, and many people are well into middle age before they even think about getting married. Yet as a culture we are still fixated on coupling, proven by the popularity of shows like *The Bachelor* (casting for its 15<sup>th</sup> season!), and the plethora of romantic comedies always topping the box office. So it seems no matter how evolved we've become, most people are still looking for that special someone, and they assume that you are, too.

Your friends care about you, and since they prefer to be in a couple, they cannot fathom that you actually like being single. They probably think they're being helpful by trying to set you up, and don't realize that they are actually getting on your last nerve. And if we're honest about it, they may also be hoping for some entertainment out of the deal, in the form of a recap of your dates. If this is not a game you want to play, you need to speak up. The next time your friend tries to set you up, try saying something like, "Thanks, but I'm not interested in dating right now," or "I'm really busy with my Internet startup/screenwriting workshop/air hockey league to bother with dating." If they press on, change the subject, preferably to their own romantic life. "So, how's everything going with Michael?" "Is he still doing that annoying grinding thing with his teeth at night?" Soon, they'll get so swept up in the details of their own relationship, they'll stop pestering you about the one you don't have.

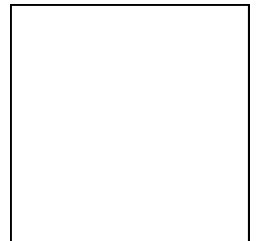
**Disclaimer: The Wright Down To It advice columnist is NOT a mental health professional. This column is for entertainment purposes only.**

### Complementary Health Therapies Available

- Low-cost massage therapy and acupuncture
- Free Reiki.
- FREE weekly Yoga for ALL clients, client loved ones, volunteers and HIV Service Providers!

Call 236-8901 for more information and to schedule your appointments now.

2009 Nonprofit Excellence Award Finalist



**SAVE THE DATE**  
***CulinART Gala***  
Thursday, February 17, 2011