



HEALTH AWARENESS

Living Positively With HIV

(NAPSA)—Albert knows firsthand what stigma means for an HIV patient in the Hispanic community. When Albert's brother was diagnosed with HIV, the only family member he confided in was Albert, because he thought no one else would support him. When the truth later became known and Albert's brother died of AIDS complications, the family refused to admit it—instead, friends were told the cause of death was a “brain tumor.”

Years after his brother's death, Albert found out he himself was HIV positive. Supporting his brother when he was sick made Albert realize that, in order to lead a fulfilling life and fight against HIV, he had to fight the stigma that made his brother's struggle against the disease even more difficult.

“We need to rise above the stigma by talking about our conditions and caring for our bodies and minds,” says Albert. Albert's work as a personal trainer and a patient educator for a New York-based nonprofit organization has allowed him to give back to the community and provide support for others—something he saw missing among his family and friends. Albert hopes that, by telling his story, he will encourage members of the Latino community to follow his lead by getting tested and seeking treatment.

“Every day I meet people who are afraid of rejection by their family and community when they are diagnosed with HIV,” says

Patients on HIV treatment should discuss lifestyle, mental well-being, cardiovascular health, potential family planning and family and medical histories with their doctors so chances of complications can be lowered. ⓘ

Dennis deLeon, President of the Latino Commission on AIDS. “It's a shame that stigma prevents Hispanics from talking about HIV. We hope to reduce these fears and encourage more people to get tested and, if they have the virus, to find information about treatments that will allow them to manage the condition effectively. They can live productive lives and contribute to the well-being of both their family and community.”

Some issues that patients on HIV treatment should discuss with their doctors include lifestyle, mental well-being, cardiovascular health, potential family planning and family and medical histories. By talking to a doctor, the chances of complications caused by these factors can be lowered.

To find more information about Latinos and HIV/AIDS, visit www.latinoaids.org/facts.