

# RISE ABOVE

SERVING THE **WHOLE PERSON**

- July 4** WNCAP offices will be closed for Independence Day
- July 21** NAMI Mental Illness Walk
- July 26** Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
- July 26** Cherokee Rally for Recovery
- July 28** World Hepatitis Day
- August 2-4** Mountain Dance and Folk Festival
- August 3-4** LEAF Downtown
- August 26** Women's Equality Day
- August 27** National Faith HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- August 31** International Overdose Awareness Day
- August 31/September 3** WNCAP offices will be closed for Labor Day

## RISE ABOVE WORD SEARCH

- |           |                |               |            |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| ADVOCACY  | FDA            | MEDITATION    | RYAN WHITE |
| BREATHE   | HARM REDUCTION | MINDFULNESS   | SAFE       |
| COMMUNITY | HIV            | OPIOID CRISIS | SYRINGE    |
| DISCLOSE  | MEDICAL        | PUBLIC HEALTH |            |

C R S Q N W S Y R I N G E K P S X A U D M P J H M  
 R O D F W S B W E V Z A B S X A C Z C I B J Q E H  
 B H M I C H O S F O P I O I D C R I S I S B G N M  
 P T A M S W M U A A D V O C A C Y M M Q W V N V J  
 W L U X U C Y V S B D O A R I J D U K M E T T M O  
 D A W D Q N L E Q V L M U R M S G N Q T F E K Y O  
 J E O D R R I O B D S C T I U T Y T H R L H C N N  
 W H R W L O X T S M I N D F U L N E S S W K O O O  
 C C P O M P N M Y E Y U M I T S X D X N P X M N I  
 T I C W B M X G G D D H E I N E F F E L E U E M T  
 N L U T E T S N E B I Y D Y B V A S N Z R G G U C  
 Q B A L E S Y S T I D S I R I G O F B H I D N S U  
 C U V I K M J E I M R L T M N X S D W T I Z A U D  
 V P S E G G S O H M R G A L R O S A O R V S B S E  
 J T F R S G D K W O R H T Y A J B R E A T H E D R  
 T X J Q C D U U N S V K I T Y C V J A B B H G R M  
 A Q B M A D H A A U J H O I K Z I Q H F Q X Y O R  
 A J G Y H I B N Y Q F R N C M S H D V I E B A M A  
 U Y L D L N V T R S V L J I C A G I E V N S V G H  
 M D E P G Y H J Z B O X L U C Y H C M M U M I V U

NEXT ISSUE  
SEPTEMBER 2018  
Nutrition  
State Advocacy  
PrEP  
And More!

## ASK MISS WINNIE...

Dear Miss Winnie...  
 I met a great guy recently at the Earth Fare Cafe. We clicked really well and ended up spending the entire day together. No sex yet, but we have been texting a lot and have plans to hang out this weekend. I am HIV+, undetectable with no other issues, but I have not disclosed my HIV status yet. Quite frankly, I am afraid if I do, I will never hear from him again. What should I do?  
 - Anxious in Asheville

Dear Anxious...  
 Hmm... so in all this time together and online the subject never came up? Maybe "Heart Throb Boy" is afraid of telling you what he's got locked away in his closet. Break the ice... tell him! If he does not understand that it is much safer getting involved with someone who does regular doctor visits and labs than someone who does not and might not even know his own status, then he is an idiot and you would be better off not hearing from him again. Or maybe he will be so proud of you for being so brave and you will both live together happily forever. Either way, you win! Good luck!

Have a question for Miss Winnie?  
 Email [MissWinnie@wncap.org](mailto:MissWinnie@wncap.org) and put your mind at ease!



Questions, Comments, Criticisms?  
 Contact RISE ABOVE:  
[riseabove@wncap.org](mailto:riseabove@wncap.org)  
 (828) 252.7489  
 P.O Box 2411 · Asheville, NC · 28802

## HIV CRIMINALIZATION LAWS CHANGE IN NORTH CAROLINA

In January 2018, the **North Carolina Commission for Public Health** voted to modernize North Carolina's HIV control measures, a series of statutes written into state law in 1988 in an attempt to protect people against HIV infection. The movement to modernize the law was spearheaded by the **North Carolina AIDS Action Network (NCAAN)**.

The centerpiece of the original law made it a crime for a HIV-positive person to not disclose to a sexual partner that they were HIV-positive, or to engage in sexual intercourse without a condom. **Public health still strongly encourages people to have open and honest conversations with partners about sexual history and risk, and to use condoms to prevent transmission of all sexually transmitted infections (STIs).** However, the old criminal laws were counterproductive to public health. They were outdated, stigmatizing, and discouraged people who might be infected with HIV to get tested or to disclose their status for fear of criminal prosecution ... *continue on next page*



## FINDING A COMMUNITY AT AIDS WATCH

BY: GIOVANNI DE STEFANO

Celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, **AIDS Watch**, an annual nationwide day of HIV advocacy in Washington, D.C. was an eye-opening experience. Whether a member of the HIV-positive community or an HIV-negative ally, we came together and made the statement that living with HIV is not a life sentence and that we are proof of what it means to live fully.

The cornerstone of AIDS Watch is to meet with elected Representatives and Senators to educate them about HIV-related issues and to seek support for public policies that benefit people living with HIV. The first meetings that our North Carolina brothers and sisters took were with the offices of Senators **Richard Burr** and **Thom Tillis**. We discussed increased funding for the **Ryan White Program**, the federal program that provides medical care for people ... *continue on next page*



WNCAP

*"Criminalization"* ... Since 1988, much has changed in HIV. For example, if a patient follows their prescribed regimen of anti-retroviral medications, they can often deplete the level of HIV in their body so much that they achieve **"viral suppression"**. The new NC HIV Control measures define a virally suppressed person as having **less than 200 copies of the HIV virus per milliliter of blood**, for at least **six months**, as well as being actively **connected to medical care** in order to maintain viral suppression. A virally suppressed person is unable to transmit HIV during sex, whether or not a condom is used. **The "U=U" movement (Undetectable Equals Untransmittable)**, which was recently validated by the **Centers for Disease Control**, informs the modernized control measures. The revised control measures state that a person who has been virally suppressed for at least six months and is in treatment no longer has to inform their partners about their HIV status. **Also, a person who is HIV-positive is no longer legally required to use a condom during sexual intercourse if:**

- **The person who is HIV-positive is virally suppressed**
- **Their partner is taking PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)**
- **Their partner is also HIV-positive.**

### U = U

### Undetectable Equals Untransmittable

*"A person who is virally suppressed for at least six months is unable to transmit HIV during sex, whether or not a condom is used".*

People who are HIV-positive and not virally suppressed are still required by state law to disclose their status, even if their partner is on PrEP or HIV-positive.

The science behind U=U only applies to sexual intercourse. It does not apply to people who inject drugs. The full text of the new North Carolina HIV control measures can be found at [wncap.org](http://wncap.org).

*"AIDS Watch"* ... living with HIV and to support the **Affordable Care Act** so that high-quality healthcare is possible for people living with HIV. We introduced to them the slogan **"U=U"** which stands for *Undetectable Equals Untransmittable*.

After meeting with the offices of Sens. Burr and Tillis, the North Carolina coalition then broke up into teams based on district, and we met with staffers from the offices of **Reps. Mark Meadows** (NC-11) and **Patrick McHenry** (NC-10). These meetings were especially rewarding. We were able to address the **opioid crisis** and how WNCAP, through their syringe exchange program, is playing an active role in responding to the crisis. The importance of **mental health services** was also discussed and its role in healing and advocating healthy behavior for underserved communities. We came out of these meetings feeling we had

accomplished our goal.

**This was my first participation in AIDS Watch, and it will not be my last.** The personal stories that I witnessed from total strangers helped shed light on the importance of telling my own story. Most importantly, I feel like I am a part of something - a vibrant, informed and thriving community.



*"I feel like I am a part of something - a vibrant, informed and thriving community."*

## MEDITATION FOR THE MODERN LIFE

Hidden within our daily lives is an opportunity for peaceful transformation; the power of moment-to-moment observation.

Often referred to as **"mindfulness,"** this popular buzzword points to a much more ancient tool for inner peace and self-discovery; meditation. But what is meditation and what are its benefits with regard to HIV?

Merriam-Webster defines meditation as the act of "mental exercise (such as concentration on one's breathing) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness." Research proves it's much more. **A 2008 study at UCLA** discovered that meditation "can have a direct impact on slowing HIV disease progression."

While there are many forms of meditation, the most effective way to start is breath observation. This is because our breath is with us from birth till death, in every moment, and is beyond the control of the mind.

1. Start by sitting comfortably in a quiet space, based on whatever your physical body will allow.
2. Bring your attention to your nostrils. Observe whatever breath-sensation you feel there. Although subtle, the breath always creates sensation as it flows in and out of our nose. It can be any sensation, but whatever the sensation, just observe.
3. Keep your attention focused from breath to breath. After a few breaths, your mind may wander and start thinking about something. Meditation is the opposite of thinking. Notice that the mind will always wander into the past or the future, but it doesn't want to stay in the NOW. Bring it back to the NOW moment by observing the breath. When you realize again that the mind is no longer focused on the breath, don't become upset. Simply say to yourself "the mind has wandered away," and bring your attention back. Continue to bring the mind back each time, regardless of whatever thought it presents.



Be gentle and kind to yourself. At first, you may only be able to observe the breath for a few seconds before the mind wanders. Don't give up. The secret to success is practice. Soon, instead of only observing 2 breaths before the mind wanders, you may observe 4, then 6 and so on. Like this, the peace and discipline of the mind will grow stronger.

Once you're done, don't get up immediately. Observe how your body and mind feels. Are you relaxed? A bit more peaceful? This is the fruit of your efforts.



**Needle Exchange Program of Asheville**  
**Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays 9am-5pm**  
**554 Fairview Rd., Asheville, NC, 28803**

*Sterile Syringes | Safer Injection Supplies | Naloxone  
Safe Syringe Disposal | Information | No Judgement*