



**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Detailed information about the upcoming 24th Annual AIDS Update Symposium, including Update speakers and how to register!
- Did you know that *all* baby boomers should have a one time Hep C test? See more on pg. 2!

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The Network

MARCH 2014

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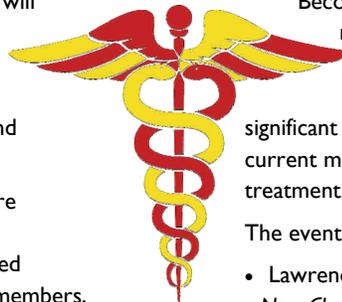
24th Annual AIDS Update Symposium

March 20th, 2014 | 11:30am to 5:30pm | Embassy Suites | San Luis Obispo, CA | CMEs & CEUs Available

Please join us for our 24th Annual AIDS Update Symposium! Our program strives to examine topics that inform us about the health of our community.

This year's symposium will focus on challenges facing an aging HIV population. We will discuss new treatments for Hepatitis C that can dramatically change the course of the disease as we know it. In addition, we will review new research in HIV/AIDS care and treatment.

As health care providers, and concerned community members,



the 24th Annual AIDS Update Symposium will provide you with important updated information about HIV/AIDS treatment and that will keep you on the forefront of caring for individuals living with this devastating disease.

Upon completion of this program, participants will be able to: Understand the effects of aging on people living with HIV; Become acquainted with new medications for hepatitis C treatment, and their significant impact; and, Identify current modalities for HIV/AIDS treatment.

The event program includes:

- Lawrence Mc Glynn, M.D.- *New Challenges Facing an Aging HIV Population*

- Wilson Ly, PharmD- *The Projected Future of Hepatitis C Care, Including Exciting New Treatments*
- Benjamin Young, MD, PHD, AAHIVS- *HIV Update*

To register online, visit <http://goo.gl/th034R>, or send your registration fee check (payable to AIDS Support Network) to:

*The AIDS Support Network
AIDS Update Symposium
P.O. Box 12158
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
Attn: David Kilburn*

Registration fees are \$55 before March, 1, and \$65 after that date. Contact us for available **student discounts**. Fees include lunch, materials from speakers, and a comprehensive list of local resources.

ASN Spotlight: Ed Attala, 2014 Board President



Ed Attala, a San Luis Obispo native and local lawyer-of-all-trades, absolutely lights up

when he speaks about his father.

According to Ed, his father was a brilliant, gregarious man who was

bursting with life. In fact, it is his relationship with his father and his equally philanthropic mother, that inspires him to give back to this community that he loves.

Ed cared for his father, who passed away from hepatitis C related complications, throughout his illness.

Though he and his father did not

benefit from SLO Hep C Project services, Ed came across the organization and was immediately inspired to get involved and help others with hepatitis C and their caretakers.

He is excited about sharing with his community the many services the ASN & SLO Hep C Project provide to people living in San Luis Obispo county.

FDA Approves New Hep C Treatments



December 2013 marked a major medical breakthrough when the FDA approved a much-anticipated hepatitis C drug treatment, Sovaldi (or Sofosbuvir) and Ribavirin. Sovaldi is a nucleotide analog inhibitor that blocks a protein the hepatitis C virus needs to replicate, and Ribavirin enhances those effects.

The CDC's director of the Division of Viral Hepatitis, John Ward, MD, said called Sovaldi a "landmark advance in the treatment of hepatitis

C," and that the FDA's approval of Sovaldi creates "new opportunities to stop the spread of this virus and the ravages of this disease."

This new treatment option is the first to treat certain strains of hepatitis C without the addition of interferon, a drug with debilitating side effects. People taking interferon often lived with profound fatigue, depression, nausea, and diarrhea, side-effects so extreme that many hepatitis C patients had to halt their

treatment regimens.

Unfortunately, at a cost of over \$80,000 for a 12-week course of treatment, there remain serious barriers that remain between individuals living with hepatitis C and this life-saving treatment program.

Sovaldi's maker, Gilead Sciences, prides itself on its commitment to making drugs accessible to patients who can't afford them, and, on their website, promises help for people who can't afford the drug.

"The CDC recommends that anyone born from 1945 through 1965 get tested for Hepatitis C."

CDC: "All Baby Boomers Need to be Tested."

Of the 3 million people diagnosed with hepatitis C, about 75% of them are members of the Baby Boomer generation. It is estimated that 3 out of every 4 people with this disease are unaware that they have it, increasing the overall estimate to 12 million.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that anyone born from 1945

through 1965 get tested for hepatitis C.

Though the reasons why baby boomers have high rates of infection are not completely understood, it is believed that infection might have been caused by blood that was given before universal screening of the blood supply was adopted beginning in 1992.

People with hepatitis C often have no noticeable symptoms

for decades, which leads to a higher likelihood of developing serious life-threatening liver disease.

Current developments in treatment can eliminate the virus and prevent this liver damage, so the quicker you get tested, the better!

Talk to your doctor or visit SLOHepC.org for information on when and where you can get tested!

Celebrating 30 Years of Service



For the past 30 years, the San Luis Obispo AIDS Support Network has been dedicated to providing much needed services to people in our community who live with HIV/AIDS, and their loved ones.

The ASN provides an array of

wrap-around services including, but not limited to: our Food Pantry program, benefits counseling, health counseling, transportation, health insurance & Affordable Care Act support, housing assistance, and help in accessing dental & medical care.

In other words, if we see an unfulfilled need in our community, we will do our best to provide assistance.

Thank you, San Luis Obispo, for all of your support throughout the years! Here's to another 30 years!

Update: The Affordable Care Act & Covered California

Covered California, the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) healthcare exchange program for California, has experienced quite a few challenges in these initial months. From website crashes to database mishaps, it has certainly been a struggle keeping this invaluable program up and running.

Compared to the benefits this program creates, however, these annoyances are somewhat minor, and temporary.

My colleagues here at the ASN have become in-house experts on navigating the Covered California system, and, as an observer, I have seen the incredible benefits that this program has to offer.

One of the ASN's certified enrollment counselors (CECs), Elena, has expressed to me that, on more than one occasion, individuals she has successfully assisted in their enrollment have never experienced health insurance before in their lives. They were only able to access this basic human benefit through the ACA.

Another CEC, who is also our executive director, David, told me a story about a family of five who came in to sign-up for health insurance together. Once all of their benefits and subsidies were calculated, this family is paying only \$200 per month, total. And



their plan is not basic.

It is well worth the time and effort to enroll in Covered California, and it's not too late!

Open enrollment lasts until March 31st, so call us now and make an appointment! **(805-781-3660)**

Enrollment appointments with ASN CECs tend to last between 15-30 minutes, though we will stay with you until you are done. Making the appointment requires no commitment from you. It is just an opportunity to allow us to help uncover what is possible for you!

Remember, the enrollment period, or the window of time to enroll, ends on March 31st, and the next period does

not begin until October.

However, there are certain exceptions to that rule.

For example, individuals who qualify for Medi-Cal, or Cen-Cal here on the Central Coast, can sign up throughout the year.

There is no enrollment period for that program.

Also, there are certain

life-changing events that will make it possible to enroll in Covered California outside of the official enrollment period. Examples of qualifying life events are getting married, getting divorced, having a child, moving to a new state, or experiencing a significant change in your income.

The excellent CECs here at the ASN are culturally competent and motivated to help you acquire the best healthcare plan available for you, at the lowest cost possible. Whether you are a student, a retiree, or anyone in-between, we welcome all SLO County residents to call for some personalized help.

“Open enrollment lasts until March 31st, so call us now and make an appointment!”
(805-781-3660)

Your support and the support of local community members and businesses are vital to our continuing ability to provide comprehensive services to our growing number of clients. There are many ways that you can make a generous donation!

- **Money:** ALL MONEY DONATED TO THE ASN IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE & REMAINS IN THIS COMMUNITY to help SLO County residents in their struggle with HIV/AIDS and/or Hep C.
- **Time:** One of the most important ways our community supports this agency is through the gift of time. Our Volunteer Program creates opportunities to directly assist clients and staff!
- **Food:** ASN's Food Panty is always in need of the basics. If you would like to hold a food drive, or donate food directly, we have a list of suggestions for you!

You will make a difference! Contact us, or visit ASN.org, for more details!

**You Can
Make a
Difference!**



The San Luis Obispo County AIDS Support Network remains the sole community-based, non-profit organization in this county that provides supportive services to residents living with HIV disease & AIDS, and their families and friends.

Mailing Address:
 P.O. Box 12158
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Physical Address:
 1320 Nipomo St.
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Phone: 805-781-3660
800-491-9141
Fax: 805-781-3664

The SLO Hep C Project is dedicated to meeting the needs of people living with hepatitis C and increasing public awareness through educational outreach in SLO County.

The agency strives to improve the quality of life and independence of its clients by providing support on an individual basis.

Learn more at ASN.org & SLOHepC.org

Upcoming Events & Opportunities!

We are proud to offer our community a wide variety of **volunteer opportunities**. You're sure to find one that's perfect for you!

Front Desk

Volunteer:

Our front desk volunteers are the back bone of the office. They direct phone calls, greet incoming clients, help with distributing food from our pantry, and overall help to keep us sane! We love, LOVE, our front desk volunteers!

Direct Client Services:

There is always a need for a variety of services, including companionship, meal delivery & preparation, housekeeping, gardening, transportation for medical visits or groceries, pet care, and other invaluable services.

Contact us for more details!



Upcoming Events:

24th Annual AIDS Update Symposium

March 20th, 2014

11:30am - 5:30pm

Embassy Suites

333 Madonna Road

San Luis Obispo, CA

(CMEs & CEUs available)

Register Online:

<http://goo.gl/th034R>

Fee includes lunch, materials from speakers, and a comprehensive list of local resources.

For more information, visit ASN.org

Keep an eye out for our
 Famous BBQ Drive-Thru
 Fundraiser in May!