

Has it really been 20 years?

It's hard to believe that AIDSLaw has been serving clients in Louisiana for 20 years, but it's true. 1989 was truly a different world: twenty years ago cell phones were science fiction, the Berlin Wall was still standing, and HIV was a death sentence that carried with it a stigma so grave that many were afraid to even ask simple questions about the disease.

It was in this climate that James Kellogg and other local attorneys started the agency, as volunteers. With tireless commitment, and immeasurable effort, AIDSLaw has evolved into a full service legal services agency, with two offices, eight staff members, nine board members and countless statewide partners and supporters. Through hard work, AIDSLaw has earned an honored reputation, based on excellent legal service, constant outreach and continued adaptability to the changing nature of HIV/AIDS.

An impressive set of accomplishments certainly worthy of recognition!

It was a special honor to have James Kellogg and his



AIDSLaw founder James Kellogg and husband Josh Whitehouse returned to New Orleans to commemorate AIDSLaw's 20th anniversary

husband Josh Whitehouse, attend the 20th Anniversary Gala on January 15th. It was a very special night, where past, present and future friends, clients and supporters gathered to recognize the remarkable achievements of one of Louisiana's most important AIDS service organizations.

This momentous occasion was made even more spectacular by the new friends and sponsors that made the event possible: The New Orleans Pharmacy Museum, Avita Drugs, Theo's Pizza, Fresco Café, Eat New Orleans, and the Kupcake Factory.

So much has changed in the twenty years of AIDSLaw's existence, and while no one can say what the next twenty years will bring, AIDSLaw remains committed to the needs of those affected by HIV/AIDS and will provide service, as long as a need remains.

AIDSLaw looks forward to your continued support and would like to send out a very special thank you to all of those who joined in the commemoration. We are truly fortunate to be part of this wonderful community.



AIDSLaw supporters celebrate 20 years of service to people living with HIV/AIDS at The New Orleans Pharmacy Museum

Don't forget to check out our fully redesigned website at www.aidslaw.org
You can view our office hours, get information on upcoming fundraising events, link to our Facebook page and even donate through the site!
Courtesy of our generous genius friends at JDIT.



Funded by Louisiana Bar Foundation's IOLTA Program; the Ryan White Treatment and Modernization Act, through the City of New Orleans Mayor's Office of Health Policy and AIDS Funding and through the City of Baton Rouge Division of Human Development and Service; and the National AIDS Fund Southern REACH and Gulf Coast HIV/AIDS Relief Fund and the Ford Foundation.

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THANKS! AIDSLaw is enormously grateful to all of our friends who support us in the work we do. AIDSLaw is committed to continuing to fight for Louisianans with HIV/AIDS as long as there is a need. We would not be where we are without you, and we appreciate you!

Below is a list of recent membership donors. We extend sincere thanks and welcome you to join them. A reply envelope has been included for your convenience; donations are also possible through our website at www.aidslaw.org.

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Breaking News: Budget Cuts Threaten Services

In February AIDSLaw received devastating news that the State's Ryan White Part B program, administered by the Office of Public Health, was eliminating legal services as one of its funding categories. The reason given for this change was a shortfall in the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) of five million dollars that has since climbed to eleven million dollars. HIV prevention services were also cut around the state as a result of the ADAP shortfall.

For AIDSLaw this has meant that as of April 1, 2010,

we are no longer regularly serving clients in the areas outside of metropolitan New Orleans and metropolitan Baton Rouge. This means that potentially 6500 HIV-positive individuals will lose out on services that AIDSLaw could otherwise provide. The loss of the Part B funds has resulted in shortened office hours for our Baton Rouge office from five days a week to three days a week. Thanks to the National AIDS Fund, all other services will continue. We are actively seeking additional funding and hope to resume serving Acadiana and North Louisiana again in the near future.

Serious changes in a serious time News and Current Events in HIV related laws

Finally! Real Health Care Reform

Any way you look at it, we are living in a truly historic time. Our nation is going through significant changes, which will have a major impact on the lives of all Americans, including those living with HIV/AIDS.

In late March, The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was passed into law by Congress. Once active, this law will make a considerable difference to the lives and health of those living with HIV or AIDS.

There are several aspects that are especially pertinent to those with HIV/AIDS. For instance, the law requires health insurance coverage for all individuals; (with government subsidies and expanded Medicare and Medicaid); bans insurance companies from denying coverage due to "pre-existing conditions;" and

finally, it also prohibits life-time caps on how much health care an insurance plan will cover in an insured person's lifetime, which is often a serious problem for those with HIV.

While this is an enormously positive step toward fair and reasonable health care for all, it is not perfect. It is important to note that a proposal to allow HIV positive people to receive Medicaid coverage for antiretroviral therapy (ART) before they progress to AIDS was omitted.

Thus there is still work to do.

Nonetheless, AIDSLaw joins various other AIDS service organization in commending the Congress and the President on this landmark legislation.

Obama finally got the memo!

Many in the LGBT community have been disappointed by the Obama administrations silence on relevant issues. Finally, in April, there was an encouraging step.

President Obama issued a memorandum to the Department of Health and Human Services, ordering hospitals to give same-sex couples the right to be with a partner who is sick or dying. The memorandum applies to every hospital that receives Medicare or Medicaid funding, which is nearly every hospital in the country.

This move will undoubtedly make a real difference to the entire LGBT community, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS or other chronic illnesses. AIDSLaw has extensive experience in handling tragic cases where loved ones were shut out of a partner's last moments, and with this Presidential memo, hopefully incidents like these will soon become a thing of the past.

One step forward, three steps back

In a roundly criticized move, the Governor of Arizona recently signed the nation's toughest immigration bill into law. The new law, SB1070, which is constitutionally questionable at best, would make the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and give the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally.

This alarming law encourages unfair treatment and effectively legalizes discrimination. With the growing Hispanic Louisiana population, and AIDSLaw clientele, this treatment is particularly troublesome to us. We join the countless other legal aid, social justice, and community groups in protest of these draconian measures, and continue to hope for and work towards, a more tolerant future.

We need you!
Your support is vital
to the services AIDS Law
provides!
Visit www.aidslaw.org or use the enclosed
envelope to make your contribution today!
Thank you!

SMASH Hits

On December 8, 2009, AIDS Law staff members Gail Anderson and Stacey LaFleur attended Elton John's SMASH Hits Tennis Tournament hosted by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the Pennington Foundation at the Pete Maravich Assembly Center on the LSU campus. It was a fun evening watching tennis stars Billie Jean King, Lindsay Davenport, Tommy Haas, Anna Kournikova, Andy Roddick, and Serena Williams play doubles and singles games. Sir Elton John even played a game or two!

Irene W. and C. B. Pennington Foundation. We are grateful to Elton John for bringing this exciting event to Louisiana and highlighting the continued struggle against AIDS, and support of those affected, going on around the state.



AIDS Law staff and supporters at SMASH Hits

Selected Baton Rouge area AIDS service organizations, including AIDS Law, were then invited to apply for a grant from the proceeds of the event. AIDS Law was fortunate to receive \$10,000 from SMASH Hits proceeds, administered by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the

STATISTICS ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

(From Louisiana Office of Public Health, as of June 30, 2009 unless otherwise indicated.)

- As of March 31, 2010, a cumulative total of 30,067 HIV/AIDS cases have been reported in Louisiana.
- A total of 17,537 persons are living with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana; of these, 54% have an AIDS diagnosis.
- Nationally, Louisiana ranked 5th highest in AIDS case rates and 11th in the number of AIDS cases diagnosed in 2007, according to the CDC 2007 HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report.
- New Orleans ranked 2nd for AIDS case rates among the largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. in 2007; Baton Rouge ranked 3rd.
- In 2009, 1,262 new HIV cases were diagnosed in Louisiana.
- In 2009, 801 new AIDS cases were diagnosed in Louisiana.
- In Louisiana, 33% of new HIV cases and 34% of new AIDS cases are among women.
- HIV continues to disproportionately affect African Americans in Louisiana. In 2009, 75% of newly diagnosed HIV cases and 76% of newly diagnosed AIDS cases were among African Americans.
- Every 9 ½ minutes another American is infected with HIV. (CDC study)
- Approximately one in five people living with HIV are unaware that they have HIV. (CDC Figure)
- MSM are more than 44–86 times more likely to become infected than other men, and 40–77 times more likely to become infected compared to women. (CDC)

AIDS Law News and Notes

AIDS Law is proud to announce a new partnership program with Semolina (4436 Veterans Blvd, Metairie, 504-454-7930). Each season Semolina will dedicate one day to AIDS Law. On that day just mention AIDS Law to your server during lunch, dinner or while placing to-go orders and, Semolina will generously donate 10% of the tab to us! It's that simple! Your next chance to take advantage of this program is August 11th. So mark your calendars, and bring your friends!

In other exciting news, AIDS Law is thrilled to announce the 2010 "Tea Party" for the rest of us! AIDS Law and the 700 Club are celebrating true patriots; generous, open minded, free thinkers, and free spirits. On Thursday, June 24 The 700 Club (700 Dauphine, 504-561-1095) is hosting an AIDS Law benefit. This special happy hour will showcase summer's signature beverage (the alcoholic version), include a raffle for fantastic prizes, and have other great specials. Of course all for a great cause! We hope to see you there!

On January 26th and 27th AIDS Law raised the curtain on a spectacular musical production. Writer Randy Bibb organized two benefit performances of his critically acclaimed musical "Onepiece". This masterful romp of 1950's era Hollywood meets small town wit, was beautifully performed by some of New Orleans best and brightest stars. The show took the stage at Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré, and was well received by all. AIDS Law was delighted to be in the spotlight and grateful to all involved, especially Randy Bibb.

AIDS Law is fortunate to be the recipient of a generous grant from the Beird Foundation, from Shreveport. Their support has meant that AIDS Law attorneys can continue traveling to Shreveport to assist clients in ongoing Social Security cases

and other matters. Thank you to our friends in North Louisiana!

AIDS Law was also fortunate enough to be the recipient of the Friday Night Before Mardi Gras grant. Their continued support of our program, for the past four years has meant so much to us. Please consider supporting the organization by attending their annual ball.

For several years now, AIDS Law clients have benefited from the community outreach program of New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Fest. This year, as a part of the program, 10 clients from AIDS Law were given free tickets to the city's most anticipated music and cultural event. Thank you for helping our clients be a part of Jazz Fest!

AIDS Law is proud to announce that we increasing efforts to assist our Spanish speaking classes. AIDS Law staff have been taking Spanish classes, geared towards professionals, through the Louisiana Workforce Commission and Bilingual Resources. We're still learning, but we are committed to being effective advocates for our Spanish speaking community members, to whom we say: Bienvenidos a AIDS Law. Somos felices de ayudarles en cualquier manera que podemos.

And finally, a very special "Who Dat" to our 2009 Super Bowl Champions; The SAINTS! Congratulations on a spectacular season!



Welcome, Joshua!



Joshua L. Holmes is AIDS Law's new Staff Attorney. A native of Arkansas, Joshua attained his bachelor's degree from St. Louis University, following service in the U.S. Army and studies abroad in Europe and China. He moved to New Orleans for several years, selling cars and falling in love with the city. After a tornado

devastated the ranch of family friends in Missouri, Joshua moved again to help repair the damage. When the ranch recovered, Joshua attended law school at the University of Missouri, where he formed a cooperative of student organizations that focused on post-Katrina New Orleans. He returned to New Orleans after school to manage The Pro Bono Project's outreach efforts until coming on board AIDS Law. Joshua additionally volunteers with the Tennessee Williams Festival and is a board member of Louisiana's Bayou Playhouse.

The 2010 Pro Bono Publico and Teri Estrada Memorial Awards

March 25, 2010, was a very special evening on the AIDS Law calendar. On that beautiful spring Thursday, AIDS Law held our signature event, the Pro Bono Publico and Teri Estrada Memorial Awards. It was a night full of incredible individuals, remarkable service and dedicated supporters. Our friends at the Big Top Gallery and 3 Ring Productions were the gracious hosts and Stephanie Grace of the Times-Picayune was wonderful Mater of Ceremonies.

This year's recipients were more than worthy of the high honor of the award, and helped make the evening a special occasion for all in attendance.

The Pro Bono Publico Award winner was Natacha Gutierrez, former AIDS Law Board Chair, 2004-2009. During her time with the Board of AIDS Law, Natacha proved to be an indispensable leader, assisting AIDS Law through the crisis of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, was instrumental in the changeover from a former to the current executive director and has brought many dedicated Board members through AIDS Law over the years. Her commitment to the community has made a lasting impact.

The Teri Estrada Memorial Award was created in dedication to the memory of a former AIDS Law staff attorney who



Natacha Gutierrez and her husband smile for the camera



Dr. Wilcox and his family celebrate at the 2010 Pro Bono Awards

fought relentlessly to secure access to benefits, health care and services for her clients, until her death from AIDS in 1994. This year's deserving recipient was Dr. Ron Wilcox. Dr. Wilcox's impressive body of work includes acting as Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics in the Section of Infectious Diseases of the School of Medicine and with the School of Public Health with the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. He maintains a busy patient practice with four clinics weekly, seeing clients ranging from those exposed to HIV at birth to HIV-infected elderly patients as well as those co-infected with hepatitis B or C. Dr. Ron (as he affectionately known) is very active as a teaching faculty for the Louisiana LPS and is the administrative leader of the Regional AETC.

He is involved in several other aspects of HIV/AIDS education, administration, care and advocacy. Dr. Wilcox has the gift of connecting with individual patients and health care providers as well as seeing the larger picture of HIV within the health care structure. His personal passion to improve the lives of those with HIV/AIDS is evident in all his work, whether it be writing articles, conducting training sessions, developing curriculum, innovating new tools for education, or simply keeping up with a patient. His true commitment is recognized by and appreciated by the entire community.

Autumn Affair, 2009

On October 22nd, 2009, AIDS Law continued a new tradition and held the 2nd Annual Autumn Affair. By all accounts, this event built on the previous year to be a smashing success. Despite the pouring rain, more than fifty new and existing friends and supporters of AIDS Law came from around the state to learn more about the agency and our recent programs and activities.

The Autumn Affair offers AIDS Law staff and community a

unique opportunity to meet in a casual atmosphere, to share information about the agency and our work.

The event was made possible by the generous support of our hosts: the 2001 Magazine Street Gallery, and sponsors at Whole Foods and Stone Pigman Walther Wittman L.L.C.

We are especially grateful to all those that attended. It was a true pleasure, and we look forward to seeing you all at the next Autumn Affair!