

STSO Documentary Educational Guide

Chapter 12 Rochester Responds to HIV / AIDS 13:09

First reported out of New York City on June 5, 1981 as a “gay cancer”, what we know as AIDS initially felt remote until numbers of sick men came home and the disease spread locally as well. Responding to an overwhelming need, a small group of caring health professionals founded AIDS Rochester, early in the battle against the epidemic. The difficult chore of fundraising to assist the ill and support medical initiatives was undertaken by HPA – Helping People with AIDS. Another new group, MOCHA, organized to assist people of color whom AIDS Rochester could not reach, also appeared. Growing out of a pathfinding University of Rochester clinic, the Community Health Network provided health care at the forefront of medicine as more became known about the disease and effective treatment. Now merged with AIDS Rochester, this new community organization has been Trillium Health since 2013.

In the early days here in Rochester AIDS was feared, unknown, and scary. Hospitals were reticent to be identified as AIDS hospitals, and people were afraid to be identified as possibly having AIDS as they went to a clinic or hospital for testing. Depending on the location of services – within religious setting or outside – a stigma was attached to going there, and services were sometimes delivered with a hostile attitude.

1. History of AIDS in the US

A Timeline of HIV/AIDS <https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/aids-timeline/>
History of HIV/AIDS Overview <http://www.avert.org/professionals/history-hiv-aids/overview>
HIV/AIDS in the US https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_the_United_States
Gallo http://www.jacques.ihv.org/hiv_history.html
History of HIV/AIDS – Healthline
<http://www.healthline.com/health/hiv-aids/history#EarliestCase1>
Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in the United States
<http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu/InSite?page=kb-01-03>

2. AIDS in Rochester, NY

- a. Empty Closet Documentation Issues - September, 1981; October, 1981;
1982 – January, April, October, November, December
1983 – January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, December
1984 – January, February, March, April, May, June, July, September, October, November
1985 – January – February, April
- b. History of AIDS in Rochester, NY – A Community’s response
Empty Closet - March, 2015 – May, 2017
- c. Dr. William Valenti’s Archives
Rochester Medical Archives at Academy of Medicine.
Contact: Kathleen Emerson Britton Kathleen.Britton@rochesterregional.org
Director/Curator of Collections
Rochester Medical Museum and Archives
1441 East Avenue
Rochester, NY 14610

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- d. Rochester Area Task Force On AIDS Archives
 - Rich Fowler
 - Consumer & Community Relations Manager
 - 259 Monroe Avenue
 - Rochester, NY 14607-3632
 - RFowler@trilliumhealth.org
 - P 585.210.4129
 - F 585.244.6456
 - W www.trilliumhealth.org

3. Community Response

- a. AIDS Rochester
 - Empty Closet - July – September, 1983 Issues
 - Merged With Trillium Health
 - <https://www.trilliumhealth.org/en/68/history>
- b. Community Health Center
 - EC July, 1989 Non-Profit Health clinic to open In the Southwedge
 - EC February, 1990 Clinic Hosts Official Opening
- c. Helping People With AIDS
 - Helping People With AIDS Story

Featured Persons – Video and Audio Recordings of Most

Jimmy Catalano	Paula Silvestrone
Sue Cowell	Jeff Kost
Tim Tompkins	Gary Sweet
Tim Sally	Tony Green
Wayne Esposito	D J Hector
Dr William Valenti	Arlisha Massey
Daniel Meyers	Barbara Turner
John Davidson	Charles Stevens
Jacki Nudd	Gary English