

What would you do if you had a stigmatized health condition and you had to choose between your diagnosis being outed or continuing treatment?

Ollie was feeling excited as they started to a new job last month. Working in a pharmacy, they now had insurance – a relief as a person living with HIV.

It wasn't long until they discovered that their new insurance required all prescriptions to be filled through the pharmacy where they work. This meant that Ollie's co-workers could know their status based on their meds in the system, and after years of the stigma surrounding HIV negatively affecting their life, Ollie was terrified – this simply was not an option.

Taking action, Ollie reached out to Four A's in their fight to continue treatment. Ariane, our AIDS Drug Administration Program (ADAP) manager, soon realized the only way to get Ollie their medication was to convince the insurance company to approve an override and let the medication be sent to another pharmacy.

**“I think there is an impression to some who are not living with HIV that stigma isn't still there – it's a thing of the past - but this is Ollie's reality. When talking with them, I could hear in their voice how worried they were about their coworkers knowing their status.”**

With guidance from Ariane, Ollie called the insurance company several times, speaking up for their right to confidentiality in the workplace. Because of their determination, they were successful and resumed treatment through a separate pharmacy.

“It was a lot of work. The client played a huge role – the way they advocated for themselves was incredible.” Ariane reflected.

People living with HIV are burdened with the effects of stigma in their everyday lives. The fear of how they will be treated by those who know their status can become a barrier to more than just their happiness – it seeps into their workplaces, homes, social circles, and healthcare.

We all have a part to play in the fight to end the stigma surrounding HIV. We are proud to be surrounded by community members like you who believe in the importance of accessible HIV care in Alaska. **Because of your investment in Four A's, Ollie did not have to choose between receiving treatment or keeping their diagnosis confidential – they knew they had unwavering support in navigating an incredibly difficult situation.**

Every day we celebrate the successes of our clients. Today, that success was Ollie. **Thank you for ensuring that Four A's will be here to celebrate another client's success tomorrow.**

