

Nelson Vergel

Biography



Necessity is the mother of invention. Nelson Vergel, a former chemical engineer born in Venezuela, is a 17-year HIV-positive survivor. By necessity, he became a leading treatment advocate for wasting/lipodystrophy syndromes and wellness in HIV disease. In 1994, before the advent of protease inhibitors, Nelson's weight dropped from 165 pounds to 140 pounds, and he exhibited many other AIDS-related symptoms. Most of his friends had died of wasting, but he refused to be the next victim of this dreadful syndrome. Since there were no approved effective treatments for wasting, he studied every available source of information and began a life style change that dramatically improved his health and quality of life. He gained 35 pounds of lean body mass in four months. His energy level jumped, his libido returned, and his AIDS-related symptoms disappeared. Nelson looked better than ever. He wanted to share his newly acquired knowledge so others could benefit from it. Using his chemical engineering knowledge, he gathered research data from studies in the fields of sports nutrition, supplementation, exercise and anabolic therapies. Armed with this information, Nelson created in 1994 what is now known as the Program for Wellness Restoration (PoWeR), a national non-profit organization. PoWeR disseminates information about a comprehensive survival program for maximum health and productivity. Hundreds of physicians and dietitians across the country work with PoWeR to enhance the health of HIV(+) people. After using the PoWeR program, many patients have experienced the same dramatic improvements as Nelson and are thriving again.

Nelson lectures extensively around the country and overseas, providing over 200 seminars in English and Spanish. He presented abstracts to the 1996 Vancouver International AIDS Conference, the 1997 International Conference on HIV and Nutrition in Cannes, the 1998 Geneva AIDS Conference, the 2000 South Africa AIDS Conference, and others. He co-sponsored the first International Conference on AIDS Wasting in November of 1997, featuring the world's leading experts. Because of his devotion to the subject, Nelson was asked to join the

Metabolics Study Group at the AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) of the National Institute of Health (NIH), the largest HIV research organization in the world. Along with his research partner, Michael Mooney, Nelson co-authored the book, *Built To Survive*, which summarizes all the information they have gathered since 1994. All net proceeds from the sale of this book help to fund non-profit HIV wellness programs. Recently, Nelson edited and compiled information for the book, *How to Manage Side Effects*, published by the Houston Buyers Club, another non-profit organization he helped to create. Nelson is also the co-editor of the newsletter and the web site www.medibolics.com, which has received over 150,000 visitors since April, 1998.

With the fund raising help of over 150 volunteers, Nelson's dream facility, the Body Positive Wellness Center (BPWC) opened in June 1998 in Houston, Texas. This is the first in a series of non-profit wellness centers Nelson envisions across the United States and overseas. These facilities will be modeled after the Houston center, and each will offer a fully-equipped gym staffed with certified trainers, nutritional evaluation by a dietitian, a dietary supplement buyer's club, massage and chiropractic therapy, stress management classes, and a conference room for wellness and HIV treatment related seminars. Nelson wrote two research grants that received funding to study the effectiveness of his program. As of January, 2001, over 73% of the Center's 520 clients have experienced considerable gains in muscle mass, strength, and quality of life. To integrate his wellness program into a continuum of care, Nelson and board members facilitated the merger in January, 2001, between BPWC and the Montrose Clinic, one of the largest HIV clinics in Houston. Having proven his prototype in Houston, Nelson is acting as technical consultant in the creation of new wellness centers in Fort Worth, Honolulu, Atlanta, Fort Lauderdale, San Jose and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lately, Nelson obtained support from the local Ryan White Council to provide federal funding for the Houston wellness center.

Nelson is currently traveling around the country giving his seminars entitled "How to Manage Side Effects: A Survivor's Perspective," in English and "Viva la Vida con VIH," in Spanish.

To say that his program has helped Nelson Vergel return to living with vitality seems almost an understatement when all is considered. He is his own testimonial to his work.

For more information about Nelson Vergel, his book, seminars, or wellness center, please contact him at (713) 539-1978, Fax (713) 526-5883. Email: powertx@aol.com Web site www.medibolics.com
Updated May 2001