

>> I been in homeless -- homelessness, you know, off and on for three years for -- about four years. And I'd been to this homeless shelter before and every -- every two years, they want you to update your tuberculosis test. Didn't think much of it, wasn't worried about it, I've never failed a lung x-ray.

[ Music ]

As it turns out, the VA had been looking for me because my phone didn't work, and my case manager at the VA, she didn't -- she didn't know how to get ahold of me. So, she got a hold of a friend of mine that knew me real well. And he contacted me and told me that, you need to call the VA now because they're looking for you, you know, really hard. So, So, I was kind of on the run, for at least couple months. But I was living in a field close to the day labor place and, you know, one day I was sitting there thinking, man, you're better than this, you know? You can't go on like this. I couldn't look for a job because of tuberculosis, couldn't see my son, that was probably the biggest thing that turned all this around. TB actually saved my life, it really did. In the TB clinic in Austin, you know, they -- they said, you know, we might be able to get you into this hospital in San Antonio, it's called Texas Center for Infectious Disease, a wonderful place. The day I got there -- the very day I got there, I quit smoking, I quit drinking, and I quit doing drugs.

>> Jerry was an -- was an easy patient, much easier patient, you know. He did have some challenges, but the challenges were taking thing taking thing -- taking care of things that had occurred in the past. A successful patient is a patient who commits himself to treatment, that he realizes that we will offer him a good standard of care, that he accepts it, and that he also realizes that the lifestyle choices that he had made had contributed to the disease process at some point.

>> I hadn't seen a driver's license in 10 years. I had warrants out for my arrest. I -- you know, had tuberculosis, of course, hepatitis C, didn't have a place to live. When I got out, you know, I was kind of wondering, what's going to happen when I get out? Well, you know, if you're doing the right thing and people see that you're doing the right thing, they're going to help you. Somebody is going to reach out to you and help you, you know. Somebody's got something for you somewhere that you can do, no matter what kind of barriers you have. Really, my biggest message would be, you're going to have to be patient because it is a lengthy process to be cured, but you are going to be cured.

[ Music ]