

HIV LINK

The Newsletter of the HIV Center for Women and Children

Bringing together care and research in service to families in need

ADOLESCENT EDUCATION PROGRAM/TEENS HELPING EACH OTHER (THEO) STAFFER SELECTED AS LEAD YOUTH LIAISON FOR NASTAD'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Joni Watson, Program Assistant for the Adolescent Education Program's Teens Helping Each Other Project (THEO), was recently selected to serve as the Lead Youth Liaison for the African-American Advisory Committee of the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD). NASTAD is a national organization that promotes communication among state and local health departments and HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis prevention and care programs. NASTAD's vision is a world free of HIV/AIDS. Its mission is to strengthen state and territory-based leadership, expertise, and advocacy and bring them to bear in reducing the incidence of HIV infection, and on providing care and support to all who live with HIV/AIDS. NASTAD represents HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis program directors in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and the US Pacific Islands.

NASTAD's African-American Advisory Committee (AAAC) maintains an integral leadership role in fighting the HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis epidemics among African-Americans in the US. The committee consists of over 35 African-American public health professionals working in both state and local health departments representing over 30 jurisdictions. The committee is pledged to raising their collective voices and expertise with federal, state, and local entities.

The inclusion of Youth Liaisons into the ongoing activities of the AAAC increases the committee's ability to effectively infuse



Joni Watson (back row, center) at NASTAD's African-American Advisory Committee dinner in Washington, DC, October 2008.

an authentic youth perspective into all population specific activities. Serving as a Youth Liaison gives youth leaders an opportunity to contribute a youth perspective to national HIV/AIDS policy and program development focused on African-American communities. Secondly, Youth Liaisons tap into a wide range of mentors, network with colleagues, and learn new skill sets.

Ms. Watson first served as a Youth Liaison for a two-year term, which started in the fall of 2006. Christine Rucker, MA, Director, Adolescent Education Program/THEO recommended Ms. Watson to Tom Tallon of the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute for a seat on the NASTAD Committee. Ms. Watson served alongside two other young people, and was then asked to extend her term for an additional two years to function as the Lead Youth Liaison. Her role is to mentor the new

group of Youth Liaisons that were introduced to the committee during their annual meeting in Washington DC this past October. She will also continue to serve as a fully functioning member of the AAAC. "I have gained so much from this experience; serving on this committee has allowed me to be mentored by positive African-American public health leaders who all work hard to create change with the HIV/AIDS disparities among minorities," said Ms. Watson. Not only did her experience open the door to positive mentoring; she had the opportunity to lobby Congress members for additional federal HIV prevention funding, even visiting the office of US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. Ms. Watson has a bachelor of science in health and nutrition and will be working towards her MPH at Brooklyn College starting in the fall of 2009.

PROGRAM UPDATES

The opening and dedication of The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative's (IAVI) AIDS Vaccine Design & Development Laboratory took place at the Brooklyn Army Terminal on November 12, 2008.

The HEAT and FACES Programs sponsored a Halloween Safer Sex Education Party at The Lab in Brooklyn on October 17, 2008. HEAT sponsors large quarterly Safer Sex Parties at clubs in

Brooklyn where HIV counseling and testing is promoted and various incentives are offered (e.g., a DJ, refreshments, flavored condoms and lubricants, dental dams, T-shirts, bags and hats, raffles, dance contests, and door prizes). This approach taps into HIV+ patients' social networks and offers a non-threatening opportunity for HIV+ youth to bring their sexual partners to be tested. In addition, youth agencies set up resource tables and HEAT distributed literature and condom packs to youth. HEAT provided HIV counseling and testing, tested 110 youth, and identified one positive.

3rd Annual Night of Fashion

In an effort to continue to educate young

people about HIV/AIDS, the Adolescent Education Program/Teens Helping Each Other (THEO) hosted their 3rd Annual Night of Fashion Show on Friday, November 21, 2008. Young people were challenged to think about their sexual behaviors in a non-conventional manner as they relate to HIV. Local designers Raif, Redd Pearl, Mosiah's Concepts, and Room 1108 donated clothing for use in the show. The THEO Peer Educators were coached on walking the runway as preparation for the show. Friends and family members turned out to support the students, in what turned out to be a successful night, whose theme was "Be Safe, Choose Life."

GRANT AWARDS

Dr. Jack A. DeHovitz has been awarded 6 new grants for the Special Treatment and Research (STAR) Program, representing more than a 10% increase over last year's HIV/AIDS funding and demonstrating recognition of SUNY Downstate's excellence in HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention, research, and professional training. These funding awards enable Downstate to focus on populations experiencing high rates of new infections.

- \$2,250,000 over five years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand and enhance substance abuse treatment services in conjunction with HIV/AIDS services for high-risk substance abusing adults in Central Brooklyn. A major focus of this proposal is to introduce the use of buprenorphine into HIV care. Buprenorphine

is sometimes prescribed as an alternative to methadone;

- An award of \$800,000 over four years from HRSA/Ryan White Part C to provide substance use treatment, promote retention in care, and enhance case management and nutritional counseling services;
- \$780,080 over five years from the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute to enable the STAR Health Center Treatment Adherence Program to increase HIV treatment knowledge and adherence among HIV seropositive patients, and reduce HIV-associated morbidity and mortality;
- \$750,000 over five years from the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute to provide mental health care for persons with HIV/AIDS;
- An award of \$259,826 over two years from the Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health to train researchers to address the problem of cervical cancer among HIV seropositive and seronegative women in

Central and Eastern Europe. This project will build on the research training infrastructure provided by the New York State International Training and Research Program (NYS-ITRP), a cooperative program of SUNY Downstate, the SUNY Albany School of Public Health, and the New York State Department of Health;

- \$150,000 over two years from the NYS Department of Health Empire Clinical Research Investigator Program (ECRIP) for a clinical research fellowship. Dr. Jason Lazar will serve as the primary mentor of this fellowship, whose goal is to further elucidate the impact of HIV and HIV therapy on cardiac disease.

The Health and Education Alternatives for Teens (HEAT) Program, directed by Jeffrey Birnbaum, MD, MPH was awarded \$10,000 from the Magic Johnson Foundation for its Young Women's Project to enhance medical, mental health and support services for high-risk and HIV+ young women of color in Brooklyn.

PUBLICATIONS

Sharma A, Lioznov D, DeHovitz JA (2008). Russian Federation. In DD Celentano & C Beyrer (Eds.), *Public Health Aspects of HIV/AIDS in Low and Middle Income Countries: Epidemiology, Prevention and Care* (pp. 531-556). New York, NY: Springer.

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Tien PC, Schneider MF, Cole SR, Levine AM, Cohen M, DeHovitz J, Young M, Justman JE. Antiretroviral Therapy Exposure and Insulin Resistance in the Women's Interagency HIV Study. *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr.* 2008 Oct 16.

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Self-Perception of Body Fat Changes and HAART Adherence in the Women's Interagency HIV Study. *AIDS Behav.* 2008 Aug 8.

Dowd KA, Hershov RC, Yawetz S, Larussa P, Diaz C, Landesman SH, Paul ME, Read JS, Lu M, Thomas DL, Netski DM, Ray SC. Maternal Neutralizing Antibody and Transmission of Hepatitis C Virus to Infants. *J Infect Dis.* 2008 Oct 17.

Pahwa S, Read JS, Yin W, Matthews Y, Shearer W, Diaz C, Rich K, Mendez H, Thompson B; Women and Infants Transmission Study. CD4+/CD8+ T cell ratio for diagnosis of HIV-1 infection in infants: Women and Infants Transmission Study. *Pediatrics.* 2008 Aug;122(2):331-9.

Reynolds MR, Weiler AM, Weisgrau KL, Piaskowski SM, Furlott JR, Weinfurter JT, Kaizu M, Soma T, León EJ, Macnair C, Leaman DP, Zwick MB, Gostick E, Musani SK, Price DA, Friedrich TC, Rakasz EG, Wilson NA, McDermott AB, Boyle R, Allison DB, Burton DR, Koff WC, Watkins DI. Macaques vaccinated with live-attenuated SIV control replication of heterologous virus. *J Exp Med.* 2008 Oct 6.

Seifer DB, Golub ET, Lambert-Messerlian G, Benning L, Anastos K, Watts DH, Cohen MH, Karim R, Young MA, Minkoff H, Greenblatt RM. Variations in serum müllerian inhibiting substance between white, black, and Hispanic women. *Fertil Steril.* 2008 Oct 16.

Bayya J, Minkoff H, Khulpateea N. Tamoxifen and growth of an extrauterine leiomyoma. *Eur J Obstet Gynecol Reprod Biol.* 2008 Oct 9.

HIV/ID RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
HIV Seminar Dec 18 LH 1B	Usage of CCR5 inhibitors on non-Clade B HIV Type 1	Ronald D. D'Amico, DO Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Beth Israel Medical Center Division of Infectious Diseases New York, New York

ALL LECTURES TAKE PLACE FROM 12-1 pm, THURSDAYS, LECTURE HALL 1B, 395 Lenox Road, Brooklyn, NY

JOB OPENINGS

1 The STAR Program seeks a **Director of Behavioral Health** to develop and supervise a coordinated and comprehensive behavioral health division integrated into ambulatory and inpatient HIV care programs. **QUALIFICATIONS:** NYS licensed social worker, psychologist, psychiatric nurse practitioner or mental health practitioner. Minimum 7 years clinical experience in both individual and group work including experience with addiction. Minimum 5 years experience in program direction, preferably with grant funded programs. Experience with program development and grant writing preferred. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Provide direct clinical and administrative supervision of staff, including masters and bachelors level social workers, case managers and substance abuse counselors. Implement and oversee integration of comprehensive substance abuse treatment (including provision of buprenorphine) into HIV ambulatory care. Participate in program evaluation design of mental health and substance abuse services. Develop and monitor a comprehensive quality improvement program. Provide project planning and administration, including development of policies and procedures, grant writing, submission of progress reports to funders, budget development and fiscal oversight. Conduct and/or arrange for periodic in-services for clinical providers on mental health and substance abuse issues. Ensure adherence to regulatory and funder requirements.

2 The STAR Program seeks an experienced **Substance Abuse Counselor** to provide harm reduction counseling and education in an interdisciplinary HIV primary care program. **QUALIFICATIONS: Required:** Master's degree in social work or related field. NYS licensed social worker or mental health practitioner. Experience with harm reduction and relapse prevention counseling and time effective, solution-focused and cognitive behavioral treatment models. Effective written, verbal, organizational and interpersonal skills. **Preferred:** CASAC or CASAC eligible. Experience with HIV+ populations. Bilingual in English/Spanish or English/Haitian Creole. Familiarity with buprenorphine treatment. Experience with inte-

gration of Seeking Safety intervention. Successful completion of acupuncture training. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Provide evaluation, assessment, intervention and counseling services to inpatients and outpatients identified as having problems related to drug or alcohol use. Conduct individual and group counseling sessions for patients on the issues of chemical dependency and drug use, integrate Seeking Safety into the treatment when appropriate. Provide leadership to quality improvement process related to substance abuse assessment and treatment. Obtain informed consent and administer patient interviews in accordance with SAMHSA program evaluation protocols. Participate in interdisciplinary case conferences and mental health meetings and serve as a resource for staff & patients on chemical dependency and its treatment. Record session notes and patient follow-up in the electronic medical record. Maintain close collaboration with health care team to ensure appropriate services for patients receiving buprenorphine treatment. Ensure referral for services such as inpatient detoxification and methadone when appropriate. Perform complementary acupuncture treatment if currently qualified.

3 The STAR Program seeks an experienced **Case Manager for Behavioral Health** to engage and retain patients in mental health and substance abuse treatment in an ambulatory HIV care program. **QUALIFICATIONS: Required:** Bachelor's degree in social work or related field. Work or internship experience working with diverse populations providing supportive counseling and/or case management. **Preferred:** Experience with HIV+ populations. Bilingual in English/Spanish or English/Haitian Creole. Experience with harm reduction and relapse prevention counseling. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Conduct initial interviews to determine if clients' interest in receiving mental health services and provide supportive counseling and education to all clients who are ambivalent about engaging in mental health treatment. Provide follow-up calls to monitor the progress of clients starting medications or psychotherapy. Follow-up on missed psychotherapy appointments and address barriers to care. Refer patients to social workers and

substance use counselors as appropriate. Record all patient interactions in the electronic medical record and complete data forms as required by funders. Participate in interdisciplinary case conference activities, mental health meetings and the quality improvement process. Facilitate ongoing linkages with other agencies, including substance abuse treatment facilities. Attend community-based meetings and participate in outreach activities such as health fairs, to facilitate networking and promote program services.

4 The STAR Program seeks an **Administrative Director for its Adult HIV Service** to maintain, develop and implement a multidisciplinary, integrated HIV care program that is compliant with SUNY Downstate's requirements and other regulatory agency standards; ensure grant compliance, monitor performance, collaboratively supervise multidisciplinary staff and administrative personnel; oversee QI program; represent STAR Health Center at ambulatory care meetings; resolve consumer complaints; identify and resolve systems issues that impact service delivery for HIV+ inpatients; work collaboratively to optimize reimbursement opportunities; provide leadership and ongoing support to the STAR Community Advisory Group; serve as primary liaison between the adult HIV program, SUNY Downstate, and the community. **QUALIFICATIONS: Required:** Bachelor's degree. Minimum 5 years of ambulatory care management experience. Strong leadership skills and demonstrated administrative skills. **PREFERRED:** Master's degree in healthcare administration, public administration or related field. Experience in the design and implementation of a quality improvement program. Experience with multiple funding streams and several funding sources, including grants management experience.

For each position above, please submit resume and cover letter with salary requirements to:
Ellen Honey, LMSW
Administrator, STAR Program
SUNY Downstate Medical Center
450 Clarkson Avenue, Box 1240
Brooklyn, NY 11203
ellen.honey@downstate.edu
Fax: 718.270.3386

PHONE LINK

All of the programs listed below are part of SUNY Downstate's HIV Center for Women and Children. For more information about the services each program provides, please call the numbers listed or the HIV Center for Women and Children at:

(718) 270-2301 or 4736
OR visit our website at:
www.hivcenter.org

PATIENT CARE AND SERVICES FOR ADULTS

Out-Patient Care
STAR Health Center (SHC):
(718) 270-3745

Mental Health Services:
(718) 270-3745

Family-Centered Care Program
(FCCP) (718) 270-2357 or 3745

FOR ADOLESCENTS

Family, Adolescent &
Children's Experience at SUNY
(FACES):
(718) 270-3826

Health & Education
Alternatives For Teens (HEAT)
Program:
(718) 467-4446

FOR CHILDREN

Infant and Child Learning
Center (ICLC):
(718) 270-2598

Family Care Center (at KCHC):
(718) 245-2562

COMMUNITY AND MEDICAL EDUCATION

Prevention Services for
Adolescent and Young Adults -
SUNY Adolescent Education
Program (AEP):
(718) 270-3203

Educating People at Risk
(EPAR):
(718) 270-3897

HIV Clinical Education
Initiative:
(718) 270-4752

RESEARCH

Adult Clinical Trials:
(718) 270-4487

FACULTY AND STAFF UPDATES

Jeffrey Birnbaum, MD, MPH and **Lisa Orban, PhD** were honored by the Lorenzo Jackson Foundation for their work in educating youth through the Health and Education Alternatives for Teens (HEAT) Program at its first annual benefit gala on November 19, 2008. The Foundation's mission is to inspire young people living with HIV/AIDS to move forward with their lives and pursue their education.

Jack A. DeHovitz, MD, MPH participated in a NIAID review panel in November for the Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR), a P30 program whose goal is to provide administrative and shared research support.

Harry Johnson joined the STAR Program as a Case Manager. Mr. Johnson has a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services from NYC College of Technology/CUNY and is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work at Hunter College School of Social Work. Prior to joining STAR, Mr. Johnson provided case management services at Village Care of New York/Rivington House Skilled Nursing Home. He is also a lay reader, vestry member and AIDS Walk organizer at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC.

Tina Jones has joined the HEAT Program as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Outreach Coordinator. This is a new position created by HEAT to provide enhanced and expanded outreach targeting LGBT youth in Brooklyn. Prior to coming to HEAT, Tina was an Outreach Specialist at The After School Corporation (TASC) and was an Assistant Group Worker at Project Reach Youth.

She is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Arts at Marymount Manhattan College.

Don M. Kayembe has joined the STAR Program as a Senior Research Support Specialist in the Treatment Adherence Support Program. Mr. Kayembe has a baccalaureate degree in medical technology with specialty in nutrition and dietetics from the College of Medical Techniques of Bukavu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and a certificate in Nutrition Project Management from Wageningen University (The Netherlands). He has devoted 10 years as a health professional to serving people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. His experience includes tutoring nursing students, working as a provincial health and nutrition project coordinator at the United Nations and for the Ministry of Health in Zambia, and working as a treatment education and adherence specialist/case manager with CAMBA (based at Brooklyn Hospital-PATH Center).

Michael Reiter, PhD has joined the FACES Program as a clinical psychologist working with children, adolescents, families and couples. Dr. Reiter received his doctorate in psychology from George Washington University and completed his internship at Interfaith Medical Center in Brooklyn. He has a recent publication in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships for which he also serves as a reviewer.

Christina Sferruzzo, MS has been selected as the new HIV Center Coordinator. Ms. Sferruzzo has a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Master of Science in Early Childhood Education from Brooklyn College. In addition, she has nearly 19 years of experience in grant and research administration with The Research Foundation of CUNY (Brooklyn College Campus).

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