As part of its mission to build the capacity of HIV and infectious disease research throughout Eastern Europe, the New York State International Training and Research Program (NYS-ITRP) (Jack DeHovitz, PI) held a major conference in Kiev, Ukraine from June 20-21, 2013. The event commemorated the 20th anniversary of NYS-ITRP by bringing together trainee alumni, in-country collaborators, and associated US faculty. The assembled guests shared their past accomplishments, current projects, and future research interests. In addition, the conference strengthened collaborations and mentorship relationships between alumni and US faculty for public health program implementation, research, and policy.

The event was attended by over seventy participants from past and current target countries, including representatives from the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Ukraine, Hungary and Armenia. Throughout two very full days of panels and presentations, participants had the chance to hear from US and in-country thought-leaders in infectious disease treatment, care, and research. A broad range of topics was addressed including research in injecting drug users, models for adherence, the epidemiology of food borne infections, and the role of implementation science in controlling HIV and hepatitis C infection. Audience participation was lively and included a poster session highlighting research from the region. Participants also had the chance to discuss the different approaches to infectious disease research and pro-
grammatic models for treatment, care and prevention that have been implemented in their home countries.

Dr. DeHovitz also offered participants a reflection on the many accomplishments of NYS-ITRP. Throughout its 20-year history, NYS-ITRP experienced impressive growth throughout the region by forming collaborations in new countries such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan while supporting alumni from its original focus countries. Over one hundred seventy trainees have received either long-term or short-term training in the US through NYS-ITRP while more than six thousand health care professionals received training via in-country workshops and training sessions. NYS-ITRP alumni have produced over seven hundred book and journal articles. Many alumni now hold leadership positions in their ministries of health, schools of public health, and research institutions and they have helped to shape policies for the prevention and treatment of HIV and infectious disease in Eastern Europe. We thank all of our participants and faculty for an energizing meeting. NYS-ITRP will continue to support alumni accomplishments and recruit new students for this critical research training program.

**Development of the International School of Public Health in Georgia**

The establishment of the International School of Public Health at Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) in the Republic of Georgia in 2007 represented a significant milestone in the history of the NYS-ITRP. Over the past decade, a variety of Fogarty supported NYS-ITRP, Emory AITRP/GID and other programs have supported MPH or MS training in the US. This provided the critical mass to begin the development of an MPH-level public health education program in Georgia. This collaboration resulted in the signing of an MOU in May, 2009 (in the presence of the deputy ministers of Health and Education as well as the Rector of TSMU) between the NYS-ITRP and TSMU. The first trainees from this collaboration initiated their studies in the US in June, 2009 and the program has now graduated a total of 7 MPH graduates who have received joint training through this program. Former NYS-ITRP trainees, Maia Butashvili, MD and George Kamkamidze, MD, helped to develop the joint MPH program at TSMU and are now key faculty.

A link to a new video on the collaboration between the SUNY campuses at Downstate and Albany and the NYS Department of Health on the 20-year project, sponsored by the Fogarty International Center, to enhance AIDS research and training in Central and Eastern Europe, appears below.

http://link.videoplatform.limelight.com/media/?mediaId=2e74c0db00b0437296d509c2e20e8d8a&width=480&height=321&playerForm=Player

For the HIV/ID Seminar Series and the latest employment opportunities visit our website at [www.hivcenter.org](http://www.hivcenter.org)

The HIV Center is now distributing the HIV Link electronically. If you are interested in remaining on our mailing list, please send your email address, along with your name and mailing address, to hivcenter@downstate.edu

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**Faculty and Staff Updates**

Karen Behringer, FNP, MPH joined the FFHC Program of STAR in August 2013. She will provide prenatal care in Suite G and with the WIHS.

Ms. Behringer is a public health and family nurse practitioner with more than 20 years’ experience in reproductive health. She received a BS and FNP from Seattle Pacific University and an MPH from the University of Connecticut. She has expertise in direct patient care, health clinic management, clinical training and mentorship, nurse capacity building, and program development in the US as well as sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and China.

Jeffrey Bimbaum, MD, MPH, received a SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Professional Service. Dr. Bimbaum, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health, is Executive Director of the Health and Education Alternatives for Teens (HEAT) Program at SUNY Downstate. HEAT offers one-stop, comprehensive care and support for HIV+ and at-risk youth aged 13 to 24.

It is the only program of its kind in Brooklyn, and it has helped hundreds of teenagers and young adults since 1992. Dr. Bimbaum’s work with HEAT has been recognized by several prominent health organizations and entities, including the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute which recognized his contributions with the 2012 Linda Laubenstein Award for Excellence in HIV Care. HEAT has also been recognized for its work with HIV+ youth by the Henry van Ameringen and Elton John AIDS Foundations. He is the author of several sets of clinical guidelines for clinicians who treat HIV+ teens, and regularly mentors medical and public health students serving the HIV community across Brooklyn. Dr. Bimbaum has also represented SUNY Downstate with his HIV expertise internationally, providing training sessions and consultation in Nigeria, Malawi, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Russia.

Keren H. Francois, RN, joined the STAR Program in April 2013 as Nurse Manager for the STAR Health Center’s (SHC) Care Coordination Project. She spearheaded the SHC’s participation in the Brooklyn Pride Festival on June 8, 2013 in an ongoing effort to raise awareness of the SHC’s specialized LGBTQ services. Lori and the SHC team, which included Jack DeHovitz, MD, MPH, Damian Bird, and several others, worked tirelessly to ensure that the event was a success.

Lori Hurley, LMSW, MPH, Manager for the STAR Health Center’s (SHC) Care Coordination Project, spearheaded the SHC’s participation in the Brooklyn Pride Festival on June 8, 2013 in an ongoing effort to raise awareness of the SHC’s specialized LGBTQ services. Lori and the SHC team, which included Jack DeHovitz, MD, MPH, Damian Bird, and several others, worked tirelessly to ensure that the event was a success.

For more information on the HIV Center, please visit our website at [www.hivcenter.org](http://www.hivcenter.org).
The STAR Program received a $100,000 award from HRSA to provide high-resolution anoscopy (HRA) to deliver and expand anal screenings for people living with HIV or AIDS (PLWHA) to diagnose and treat anal dysplasia (including squamous cell carcinoma or anal cancer) and human papilloma virus (HPV). The requested funds will be used to purchase High-Resolution Anoscopy (HRA) equipment, to train and supervise HIV clinicians on its use, and to perform HRA. HRA is a minimally invasive procedure for more detailed identification, management and treatment of anal dysplasia in high-risk populations.

**New HIV Track Option Medical Residents**

In April and May 2013, the STAR Program recruited and selected its inaugural cohort of HIV Track Medical Residents. Karen Ha, Edwin Chiu, Katherine Kuntz (PGY-1) and Silda James (PGY-2) began their orientation with STAR Health Center (SHC) staff on July 2, 2013, under the direction of Jameela Yusuff, MD, MPH, SHC Medical Director.

SUNY Downstate Medical Center was one of three sites in the US funded by HRSA’s HIV/AIDS Bureau to pilot this unique HIV clinical training program. This award supports the development of an innovative HIV/primary care track within the Categorical Internal Medicine Residency Program, with the ultimate aim of bolstering the HIV clinical care workforce. Our nationally-recognized HIV treatment and research programs, our large Medicine residency program, and our diverse patient population make us uniquely suited to offer this training opportunity. The HIV Track Option offers enhanced mentorship, integration of HIV+ patients into a residents’ general medicine panel, and specialized education. SHC HIV specialist clinicians will train, mentor and supervise the residents in their provision of ambulatory HIV care. We welcome our new residents and look forward to this exciting new mission for the STAR Program!

**HEAT Clinic’s New Location**

The Health and Education Alternatives for Teens (HEAT) Program (www.heatprogram.org) has moved its clinic to a new location at SUNY Downstate Medical Center’s University Hospital of Brooklyn, 470 Clarkson Avenue, Nursing Station 41 (4th Floor), Brooklyn, NY 11203. Call (718) 467-4446 for appointments. Clinic hours: Monday and Wednesday 1-5pm; Friday 9-5pm; young women’s reproductive and sexual health clinic on Wednesday from 5-8 pm.

**PROGRAM UPDATES**

Marian Searchwell, CAPP Coordinator of the Adolescent Education Program, graduated from Nyack College with a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership

MichelleAnn Joseph is the latest recipient of the STAR Staff Recognition Award. Ms. Joseph has worked with the STAR Program for almost 15 years as a Project Staff Assistant. She initially worked in the STAR Main Office and then transitioned to providing administrative assistance to some of our research projects including WIHS and those of Drs. Tracey Wilson and Howard Crystal. More recently she has begun to assist with patient-related activities including presenting a video at the STAR Community Advisory Group. MichelleAnn takes her responsibilities very seriously and is the person that everyone on the third floor of the BSB and beyond relies on whenever environmental or communications issues arise. MichelleAnn was nominated for the STAR Recognition Award because she goes above and beyond what is required of her and is willing to pitch in at any time she is needed.

Renisha Pierre joined the Adolescent Education Program as the Prevention Specialist for the Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program (CAPP). Ms. Pierre is a Macaulay Honors College Social Work student at Lehman College. She is a certified facilitator for the evidence-based intervention SIHLE (Sisters, Informing, Healing, Learning & Empowering), which is part of the CDC’s Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions (DEBI) training curriculum. She will also be facilitating the Be Proud! Be Responsible! prevention curriculum to at-risk adolescents between the ages of 14-18.
Alternatives For Teens (HEAT)
FOR ADOLESCENTS
Prevention Services for
EDUCATION
COMMUNITY AND MEDICAL
Family Care Center (at KCHC):
Infant and Child Learning
Adolescent and Young Adults –
Downstate's HIV Center
www.hivcenter.org
OR visit our website at:
(718) 270-2301 or 4736
program provides, please
about the services each
For more information
(718) 270-3203
E
(718) 270-3745
STAR Health Center (SHC):
Out-Patient Care
FOR ADULTS
Mental Health Services:
(718) 270-3745
Family-Centered Care Program
(FCCP) (718) 270-2357 or 3745
FOR ADOLESCENTS
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
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Adolescent and Young Adults – SUNY Adolescent Education
Program (AEP):
(718) 270-3203
Educating People at Risk
(EPR): (718) 270-3897
HIV Clinical Education
Initiative: (718) 270-4752
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Adult Clinical Trials: (718) 270-4487

PUBLICATIONS

HIV link
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