The Special Treatment and Research (STAR) Program recently received its third award from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). STAR was awarded $1,487,628 over 5 years from SAMHSA’s Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) through its Ready-To-Respond (RTR) Initiative. The RTR Initiative is one of CSAP’s Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) programs, which provides substance abuse and HIV prevention services to at-risk minority populations in communities disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. The initiative builds upon the previous accomplishments of MAI grantees in providing evidence-based prevention services by expanding knowledge and experience in developing blended substance abuse and HIV prevention practices for these populations. The STAR RTR (DeHovitz, PI) will target older adults (age 50+) impacted by substance abuse and HIV/AIDS, and will be implemented by STAR and the Department of Family Medicine at SUNY Downstate. Strategies and interventions to be implemented are based on: 1) RESPECT 2, derived from Project RESPECT, an evidence-based prevention intervention; and 2) Florida Brief Intervention & Treatment for Elders (BRITE), a SAMHSA Center for Substance Use Treatment (CSAT) initiative that implements the Screening, Brief Intervention, & Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), an evidence-based practice. Project goals and objectives include: adapting strategic plans to address adults aged 50 and older based on current needs assessment and updated data; and providing targeted outreach, substance abuse/HIV prevention education, screening, HIV testing, and referrals.

The STAR Program’s first SAMHSA/CSAP award was received in 2005 ($1,271,600 over 5 years) to conduct the “Brooklyn Substance Abuse, HIV, and Hepatitis Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Project.” The SPF Project, now in its final year, developed and implemented substance abuse, HIV and hepatitis prevention interventions for minority and reentry (formerly incarcerated) populations in Brooklyn. Activities included forming a workgroup of key community stakeholders, conducting an in-depth community needs assessment, developing a strategic plan and capacity to address substance abuse, HIV, and hepatitis prevention needs, and implementing evidence-based prevention and infrastructure development activities. Collaborators included Beth Israel Medical Center Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program (MMTP) and the Women’s Prison Association and Home, Inc.

A community needs assessment conducted through this grant in collaboration with community-based partners indicated that adequate prevention programs are key factors in alleviating the epidemics of HIV, hepatitis, and substance use in Brooklyn. The community resource assessment indicated a dearth of programs providing preventive services in the areas of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and substance abuse. There were only 41 HIV/AIDS prevention programs serving adults in Brooklyn; 7 agencies providing adult substance abuse prevention; 25 agencies providing hepatitis C (HCV) testing, and another 16 agencies providing hepatitis A and B vaccinations. A key recommendation from the project’s strategic plan was to develop more licensed adult HIV, hepatitis, and substance abuse prevention programs in Brooklyn. The creation of these programs is critical to decreasing the rates of the epidemic in Central Brooklyn as NYC continues to be one of the top three epicenters for HIV/AIDS. Additionally, improved access to prevention programs is needed (i.e., evening, weekend, and culturally sensitive programs). All project goals were met in December 2009 as per
continued from page 1
the approved timeline. The year 2010 was designated for data clean-up, analysis, evaluation, write-up of the final report, and close out activities.

The STAR Program’s second SAMHSA award, received in 2007 from SAMHSA’s CSAT, supported the “Treatment Capacity Expansion for Substance Abuse Treatment and HIV/AIDS Service Program (TCE/HIV).” The TCE/HIV Program is aimed at enhancing substance abuse treatment, outreach and pretreatment services for adults (18+), Black and Latino, substance-using populations at high risk for HIV infection who reside in Brooklyn. The TCE/HIV Program serves both men and women, but targets women (with and without children), given their special needs and SUNY Downstate’s clinical and research expertise on women. The primary goal of the program is to provide comprehensive, culturally competent HIV care and substance abuse services to an adult outpatient population to facilitate their reduction of substance abuse and maintain their adherence to medical care. Program objectives include enrolling 100 men and women into the STAR Program’s substance abuse program; providing comprehensive primary care, case management, housing assistance, and sub-specialty referrals to all enrollees; providing Reiki and acupuncture as both engagement tools and components of substance abuse treatment; providing a Seeking Safety intervention to dually-diagnosed clients (substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder); and providing buprenorphine therapy on-site for eligible opioid users.

In July 2010, the STAR Program received a 2010 MAI Recognition “You Make the Difference” Award from the CSAP. This award acknowledges STAR’s efforts in addressing substance abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention. Yolene Gousse, MPH, the STAR Program’s Director of Community-Based Research, has served as Project Director of both SAMHSA projects to date and will direct the day-to-day activities of the newest SAMHSA-funded project.

**PUBLICATIONS**


The STAR Program (DeHovitz, PI) received an $80,000 award from the Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) Program of HRSA’s Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to conduct the Hepatitis C (HCV) Treatment Expansion Initiative. The proposed project will provide quality integrated HIV/HCV care and supportive services at the Special Treatment and Research (STAR) Health Center (SHC), SUNY Downstate’s Ryan White-funded HIV outpatient clinic for adults. Through this grant and by leveraging existing resources, the SHC will provide a comprehensive continuum of quality HIV care and services and maximize the health status and improve the quality of life of SHC co-infected patients.

The HEAT Program received $75,000 from the New York Community Trust to conduct the two-year “3MV Project.” The project has adapted the original 3MV curriculum for HIV+ youth to provide self-esteem building and prevention interventions. The original 3MV was aimed at gay Black males with identity issues. HEAT will soon expand outreach for this project to LGBT youth in the community.

**JOBS OPENINGS**

**Patient Care Specialist (2 vacancies):**

**Salary Range:** $20,000-25,000

(18.75 hours/week)

**Required:** Valid NYS License in Practical Nursing. Two years experience in medical services. Ability to perform vital signs and spirometry, EKG and phlebotomy certified. Preferred: Prior work experience in ambulatory care setting. Additional one year’s experience in a busy Family or Internal Medicine practice. Excellent organizational and communication skills. Responsibilities: Review the medical monitoring questionnaire with patients. Perform electrocardiograms and spirometry, record vital signs (blood pressure, pulse rate, height and weight). Administer medications, including injections and PPDs, as prescribed by the physician. Assist physician in performing physical examinations as needed. Provide ongoing patient education. Screen lab values as assigned, notify attending physician of abnormal values. Record results in patient chart and logs. Telephone results to other physicians as instructed. Schedule patient appointments for follow-up and subspecialty appointments. Ensure that patients are directed to the location of subspecialty consultations. Assist with care management, patient referrals and medical inventory. Document all patient related activity in the electronic medical record. Prepare patient charts, research records and file as needed. Participate in CQI and program evaluations projects. For consideration, send cover letter and resume to: Ellen Honey, ACSW, STAR Program Administrator, at Ellen.honey@downstate.edu or FAX to (718) 270-3386.

**Clinical Research Associate II**

**Salary Range:** $37,000-70,000

**Required:** Bachelor’s degree in related discipline and 3-5 years of research experience in urban health care such as HIV disease or substance use. Good computer skills; excellent communication and organizational skills. Preferred: Prior work experience in ambulatory care setting. One year of experience in a busy family or internal medicine practice. One year of supervisory experience. One year of clinical trials experience preferred. Ability to perform vital signs, spirometry, phlebotomy skills, and experience with processing clinical specimens preferred. EKG and phlebotomy certified. Responsibilities: Recruitment, retention and continuing assessment of patients eligible for/or enrolled in various clinical research trials within the STAR Program. Serve as on-site supervisor for WTC project and liaison with practice plan administrator. Obtain informed consents and ensure ethical practice and safety of patients within the various research protocols of the STAR Program and the SUNY-DMC World Trade Center project. Ensure safe, accurate and timely collection, processing, and delivery of human biological specimens following protocols and IATA standards. Coordinate regulatory and compliance processes for new and ongoing research trials within the STAR Program. Perform electrocardiograms and spirometry, record vital signs (blood pressure, pulse rate, height and weight). Assist physician in performing physical examinations as needed and provide on-going patient education; and rapid HIV testing (RHT) as requested. Screen lab values as assigned, notify attending physician of abnormal values and record results in patient charts and logs. Telephone results to other physicians as instructed. Schedule patient appointment appointments for follow-up and subspecialty appointments. Ensure that patients are directed to the location of subspecialty consultations. Document all patient related activity in the electronic medical record (EMR). Participate in CQI and program evaluation projects. Order and maintain appropriate clinic supplies. For consideration, send cover letter and resume to: Susan Holman, RN, MS, HIV Research Projects Director, STAR Program, susan.holman@downstate.edu or FAX to (718) 270-3386.

**Clinical Research Associate II**

**Salary Range:** $37,371-109,459

**Required:** Bachelor’s degree in related discipline and 3-5 years of research experience in urban health care such as HIV disease or substance use. Good computer skills; excellent communication and organizational skills. Preferred: Prior work experience in ambulatory care setting. One year of experience in a busy family or internal medicine practice. One year of supervisory experience. One year of clinical trials experience preferred. Ability to perform vital signs, spirometry, phlebotomy skills, and experience with processing clinical specimens preferred. EKG and phlebotomy certified. Responsibilities: Recruitment, retention and continuing assessment of patients eligible for/or enrolled in various clinical research trials within the STAR Program. Ensure ethical practice and safety of patients within the various research protocols. Safe, accurate and timely collection and processing of human biological specimens following protocol and IATA standards. Coordinate regulatory and compliance processes for new and ongoing research trials within the STAR Program. Oversight of research protocols, procedures and documentation. Develop and maintain clinical expertise. Hire, train and supervise clinical trials support personnel. Conduct rapid HIV testing (RHT) as requested. For consideration, send cover letter and resume to: Ellen Honey, ACSW, STAR Program, Ellen.honey@downstate.edu or FAX to (718) 270-3386.

**Counselor**

**Salary Range:** $27,500-37,500

**Required:** Master’s degree in social work, counseling or related field. Minimum 2 years experience in the evaluation and treatment of PTSD with alcoholism and/or depression. Case management experience in navigating social services and other entitlement programs, such as worker’s compensation. Effective written, verbal and organizational and interpersonal skills. Computer literate. Preferred: NYS license (LCSW, LMSW, LMHC) preferred. Bilingual in Spanish/English preferred. Experience with electronic medical record preferred. Responsibilities: Administer semi-structured psychiatric interviews to World Trade Center responders as required by protocol. Conduct psychosocial/mental health assessment. Assess for PTSD, alcohol, depression anxiety and other mental health issues. Refer for appropriate services, entitlements and ongoing mental health treatment. Follow-up with patients to ensure services are received. Document all plans and treatment in the electronic medical record (EMR). Participate in interdisciplinary case conference activities and provide feedback to the health team on mental health/social issues. Participate in quality improvement and other program evaluation activities. For consideration, send cover letter and resume to: Michelle Melendez, MS, LCSW, CASAC, Behavioral Health Director, STAR Program, at Michelle.Melendez@downstate.edu or FAX to (718) 270-3386.
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

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**FACULTY AND STAFF UPDATES**

**Brian Edlin, MD** served as an expert consultant to the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) and the Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) on a new report calling for action on viral hepatitis entitled “HBV & HCV: America’s Hidden Epidemics.” The full report can be found at http://healthyamericans.org/ or http://www.aasld.org/. The report outlines strategies to take advantage of provisions in the Affordable Care Act and recent scientific breakthroughs to control and prevent viral hepatitis, which disproportionately affects Asian-Americans, African-Americans, and baby boomers. Dr. Edlin is also helping to prepare the Strategic Plan for Viral Hepatitis, which will be published by the US Department of Health and Human Services. The full report is available on AASLD’s website www.aasld.org and TFAH’s website www.healthyamericans.org.

**Tenneaur Brown** joined the STAR Program as a Social Work Assistant. Ms. Brown earned a BA in Sociology-Criminal Justice from Bloomfield College, and an MS in Education with a major in Counseling and Personnel Services from Fordham University. She has ten years of case management experience at Comunlife, Inc., The Lantern Group, and the NYC Human Resources Administration’s HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA), 8 years of which were spent working with mental health patients. She has additional experience working with HIV+ clients and substance users.

**Andrew Maher** joined the STAR Program as a Staff Assistant. Mr. Maher earned a BA in International Studies from the University of Washington, Seattle. His previous experience includes working in teen HIV education and prevention as a US Peace Corps volunteer in Ribau, Mozambique from 2006-2009. He is presently pursuing a Master of Public Health at SUNY Downstate’s School of Public Health.

**Gabrielle Schechter** joined the WIHS as a Clinical Research Associate. She received her Bachelor of Science in International Health at SUNY Downstate’s School of Public Health. Ms. Schechter previously worked as an HIV Counselor and Tester at Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, DC. She also collaborated on research at Planned Parenthood of New York City, as well as on women’s health research projects among Aboriginal populations in Australia.

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**SAVE THE DATES**

**World AIDS Day Commemoration “A Night of Healing” – A Youth Town Hall Meeting**
Thursday, December 2, 2010 6-8PM
SUNY Downstate Medical Center
Alumni Auditorium
395 Lenox Road
Brooklyn, New York

**World AIDS Day National Ballroom Initiative HEAT/GMAD Heroes & Villains Superheroes Ball**
December 4, 2010
Sanders Studio
Brooklyn, NY
[HIV/STI screening & more]

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**HIV link**
The HIV Center for Women and Children
SUNY Downstate Medical Center
450 Clarkson Avenue, Box 1193
Brooklyn, NY 11203

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