Inside the Core
Penn CFAR Behavioral Social Sciences Core

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CFAR Grant Renewal Process

The Penn Center for AIDS Research will be submitting its competing renewal application to NIH in June 2008 representing the CFAR’s third, five-year funding period (2010 thru 2015).

On September 25, 2007 CFAR held a half day workshop including small core meetings to discuss the renewal application and generate feedback for the strategic planning process.

The general goals of the workshop were to consider: 1) changes in the CFAR cores, policies, and administrative activities that will enable the CFAR to be most responsive and helpful to the HIV/AIDS research community at Penn, CHOP, and Wistar; and 2) how the CFAR can help to foster interdisciplinary research activities. Each Core was asked to consider: What has Penn CFAR accomplished during its ten-year existence? Where is the CFAR going and where “should” it be going? What has worked and what has not? What are the key areas of emphasis that should be developed for future HIV/AIDS research on our campus.

The success of the BSS Core and the day’s workshop was due in large part to Core members input. If you are interested in providing additional feedback please contact: David Metzger at dsm@mail.med.upenn.edu or Michael Blank at mblank2@mail.med.upenn.edu.

SBSRN at UAB

On October 2-4, 2007 the Second Annual Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Network (SBSRN) met at the University of Alabama Birmingham. BSS Core Members, Michael Blank, Dave Metzger, and Quincy Greene (CFAR CAB Member) attended. Mentoring the next generation of researchers began immediately with a day dedicated to demystifying the grant review process and research development. Two days of the meeting were devoted to scientific presentations, focusing on 5 key areas: The Future of HIV Prevention: Linking Behavioral and Biomedical Interventions- Timothy Mastro, MD (CDC); Community Perspectives on HIV Research: Have We Made Any Progress?– Rev. Edwin C. Sanders, II (Metro-politan Interdenominational Church, Nashville, TN); Linkage and Retention in Care– Michael Mugavero, MD, MPHSc (UAB); Sexual & Drug Behavior Patterns and HIV/STD Racial Disparities: The Need for New Directions- Denise Hallfors, PhD (PIRE) and Social/Health. (D. Beale)* Contact: (215) 849-1910

070 (D, Weiner)- Phase I HIV Vaccine using Penn product. Contact: (215) 746-3715

* community project

Protocols to Watch

- RARE Violence as Public Health. (D. Beale)* Contact (215) 851-1834
- Rapid HIV Testing in Community Mental Health Settings (MB Blank) - Contact: Julie Tennille 215.746.6716
- HIV/STI risk reduction of AA adolescent girls: Addressing the context of abusive relationships (A. Teitelman). Contact: (215) 898-1910
- 070 (D, Weiner) Phase I HIV Vaccine using Penn product. Contact: (215) 746-3715

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Red Ribbon Award Honorees

The CFAR CAB invites you to join them as they honor the 2007 Red Ribbon Awards Honorees at City Hall on Friday, November 30, 2007 from 4pm-6pm. This year’s recipients include: Ronda Goldfein of AIDS Law Project of PA, Policymaker; Duerward Beale of YOACAP, Community Member; Carol Vincent of CHOP, Researcher; and Harlan Shaw of the Attic, Youth Community Member. The Red Ribbon Award is one of the cornerstone events for the CFAR CAB and promises to be especially moving as they also honor the former Chair, Dale Grundy posthumously for his tireless work within the community. For more info contact Rick Britt, Chair, at philarickbritt@yahoo.com

Want More
To receive additional information on any topic you read about here today or give feedback, please contact Tiffany Brown at 215-746-7352 or email at tybrown@mail.med.upenn.edu

Visit us on the web:
www.uphs.upenn.edu/aids/cores/bssc/bsscmain.htm

Wondering how you can stay connected to others in the Core? Have a question wondering who may have the answer? Look for the latest news Use the CFAR BSS Listserv: CFAR-BSS@LISTS.UPENN.EDU
M-CTU has arrived

This Fall, a new approach to clinical trials research will make its first appearance on the streets of West Philadelphia. It’s called a Mobile Clinical Trials Unit (MCTU) and is intended to facilitate the completion of randomized clinical trials testing of HIV vaccines and other prevention interventions that may someday prevent the spread of HIV infection.

This new MCTU, operated by the HIV/AIDS Prevention Research Division, is designed to address a central problem for all clinical researchers – how to recruit eligible individuals to participate in clinical trials and ensure that they complete the studies. Without the consistent cooperation of study subjects, even the best-designed innovative trials are destined to fail.

The new MCTU represents a possible solution to retaining potential enrollees unable or unwilling to journey to Penn. The MCTU is an all-in-one mobile site for pre-screening, screening, and full study participation, eliminating the need for study participants to ever leave their neighborhoods.

The 300 square foot vehicle is fully equipped with a powered chair lift, three refrigerators, emergency supplies, and includes a reception and waiting area, two fully equipped private examination rooms, specimen processing and phlebotomy areas, an area for private consultations, a bathroom and storage space.

Where to find

- Assessment Tools http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/aids/cores/bssc/assessment.htm
- Office of Research Support Services - to promote the research endeavors at Penn http://www.med.upenn.edu/orss/
- CRISP - searchable database of federally funded biomedical research projects http://crisp.cit.nih.gov/
- NIH Funding Opportunities and Notices - grant policies, guidelines and funding opportunities http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html
- Grants.gov - is your source to FIND and APPLY for federal government grants. http://www.grants.gov/index.jsp

Vaccinations halted

The HVTN 502 Step Study being conducted in North and Latin America with a site at the University of Pennsylvania has been halted for vaccination but will continue with follow-up of its enrolled participants. The vaccine study was unable to answer the study hypothesis according to the DSMB. The vaccine study objectives were to see if the vaccine could prohibit HIV infection or lower the viral setpoint in those who became infected. AVAC in its press release about the halt of the study is noted as saying, “Even as the data disappoint, we also note the success of the STEP Study trial design in providing a swift an-
swer to the critical question of whether or not the vaccine provided any benefits. A successful clinical trial is one that produces a scientifically accurate result. It may not be the result you had hoped for, but it answers questions that help the field move forward.”

SBSRN at UAB continued...

Network Assessment and Intervention- Carl Latkin, PhD (JHU). Additionally a model project that identified interdisciplinary and cross CFAR collaborations was highlighted during the meeting. As a product-oriented conference, working groups were formed to develop potential grant submissions and papers from identified topical issues that were in line with attendees interests and a number of grant opportunities. A planning session was also held dedicated to strengthening the SBSRN infrastructure including discussions around resource sharing, collaborations and future meetings. The SBSRN looks forward to the 2008 meeting at the University of Washington in Seattle.