

Dr. David Metzger Visits China as Part of HTPN Study



Dr. David Metzger with (from left) Dr. Zhijun Li, Myat Htoo Razak, and the head of the HIV Vaccine Trials Network in Guangxi.

Dr. David Metzger left Philadelphia on May 13th at 10:00 AM for his 22 hour trip to China, to tour the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HTPN) sites there. Arriving in Beijing, the capital of China, Dr. Metzger managed to hail a cab in the 100 degree heat for the one hour ride to his hotel. The cab ride proved problematic because the cab driver spoke no English and Dr. Metzger does not speak Cantonese. Upon arriving at his hotel, Dr. Metzger met up with the other members of the site visit team, Irving Hoffman from University of North Carolina, Marybeth McCauley from Family Health International (FHI), and Kitty Poundstone, site coordinator at the Xinjaing site.

Dr. Metzger's first meeting was in Guilin and was sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Guilin is a small town by Chinese standards although it is about the size of Philadelphia. The meeting in Guilin brought together representatives from six provinces in China who are interested in learning how to recruit and follow drug users for HIV prevention studies. There was a great deal of interest from public health professionals because studies like those conducted by Project RAP have not been done before in China.

Until recently HIV/AIDS was not considered a serious problem in China and drug use was not publicly addressed. As in the United States, drug use is illegal in China, but officials estimate that between one and five percent of Chinese citizens use illegal drugs. Also, as in the United States, minorities are being hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In Western China, minorities who are native to the area suffer from the greatest poverty and lack of opportunity, and are also at the highest risk for HIV infection.

On one of the first days of his trip, Dr. Metzger visited a local public health building. The facility was called an "anti-epidemic station." A group of heroin users who had been requested to attend by the local neighborhood committee, met with Dr. Metzger to discuss drug use in China. They explained to Dr. Metzger that in China syringes are available in pharmacies for about one penny each, but that people still often shared syringes. While there are no open-air drug markets in China, drugs are still readily available. Heroin is the primary drug being used and it is estimated that half of the heroin users inject. This has led to high rates of HIV infection among drug users in several regions in China. HPTN sites have been located in two of these regions--Guangxi and Xinjiang. These sites are now involved in implementing a seroincidence study to determine the speed with which HIV is spreading among injectors. There are plans for staff from the Chinese sites to visit Philadelphia to learn about successful methods for conducting community based research.

Drug treatment options in China are severely limited. There are no methadone maintenance programs in China and no drug counseling outside of the "rehabilitation centers." Drug users are sent to "rehabilitation centers", run by the police, where they stay for three to six months. A typical day at the center includes exercise, work assignments, group discussions, and education. Dr. Metzger is hopeful that the HPTN will be able to conduct a prevention trial testing the impact of drug treatment in reducing the rate of HIV infection.





*Pictures
From
China*



كۈرۈش سۆز

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The Poetry of Valeria Simpson



Anniversary

You've accomplished something few people can
You stayed faithful and married to one man
You've proven your love and how
It's easy to see you've taken seriously your marriage
vows
Congratulations on your years of wedded bliss
If other couples follow your lead, they can't miss

First Day of Spring

The Winter days, it seemed would never end
We would patiently wait for the first day of spring to
begin
We pack away the boots, sweaters and coats
Now we put out our shorts, swim suits and sail boats
Winter is cold and very dreary
But spring is warm, and the flowers are very cheery
Gardens are started in the Spring
Flowers look-n-smell so good, it makes your heart sing
Enjoy your spring and have a blast
When summer comes, you wish spring would last-n-
last-n-last

Mother's Day

You're my mother, you're my best friend
My love for you will never end
I done things other than what I should
You were there for me when no one else would
You've taught me the diff between right and wrong
You fed me right to keep me strong
Every chance I get, I want to say I love you
And to let you know, I put no one above you
I want to grow and make you proud
And tell you "Thank You" out loud
What I am trying to tell you mom is you are the best
You stand out above the rest

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

YOU
DON'T
KNOW?



YOU
BETTER
ASK
SOMEONE!

IF YOU WERE EVER IN THE
RAP STUDY WE'D LIKE TO SEE YOU
AGAIN.

CALL TO CHECK IT OUT
1-800-528-5527
PASS THE WORD!

Prevention Point Philadelphia: Serving High-Risk Communities



Prevention Point Philadelphia (PPP) is a publicly funded community health program dedicated to reducing the transmission of HIV, hepatitis, and other blood-borne diseases in high-risk communities such as injection drug users and sex workers. PPP is operated by a professional staff and dedicated volunteers. The organization was founded in 1991 by community activists who were alarmed by the explosive rates of HIV/AIDS in high-risk groups in Philadelphia. The activists knew that the main route of transmission for HIV among

injection drug users was through the sharing of syringes and other injection paraphernalia. To combat this, the ACT UP members began distributing new, sterile syringes to injection drug users so they would not have to share syringes and put themselves at risk. Clients returned used syringes for proper disposal. Originally the organization was underground because Pennsylvania State drug paraphernalia laws made it illegal to distribute syringes. In 1992 Mayor Ed Rendell signed an emergency health order which allowed Prevention Point Philadelphia to distribute clean syringes and safe injecting equipment without fear of legal sanction. Prevention Point Philadelphia operates with an on-going contract from the City's Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs and support from private foundations and corporations.

Prevention Point Philadelphia's office is located at 333 West Girard Avenue and the group runs six sites from its van at locations throughout the city. In addition to clean syringe exchange, Prevention Point Philadelphia offers a variety of harm reduction services to its clients. Prevention Point Philadelphia offers HIV testing at all the sites, and on Saturday and Monday at the harm reduction office. Case managers are available at three of the sites and at the harm reduction office to

assist clients with referrals to drug and alcohol treatment, medical care, and other social services.

At the harm reduction office, a variety of support and education groups are available. On Monday evenings from 6:00 PM until 7:00 PM clients can attend the Life Management Group which offers clients an opportunity to get help and support with a variety of life problems. The Life Management Group also hosts the newly formed Prevention Point Philadelphia Legal Clinic which is organizing to address the legal issues of Prevention Point Philadelphia's clients. On Tuesdays Project TEACH conducts an HIV/AIDS education program from 3:00 PM until 5:00 PM. The Women's Support Group meets Wednesdays from 3:00 PM until 5:00 PM. Monday is Volunteer Day--volunteers help PPP with a variety of task from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM. A meal and SEPTA tokens are provided for all group participants.

*Prevention Point
is dedicated to
reducing the
transmission of
HIV, hepatitis,
and other blood-
borne diseases.*

Schedule of Prevention Point Philadelphia's Syringe Exchange Sites:

Tuesday-- 9:00 AM-11:00 AM at 37th and Brown Streets

Wednesday--10:30 AM-1:00 PM at 13th and Washington Avenue

Thursday--3:00 PM-5:00 PM at Somerset and Warnock Streets

Friday--12:30 PM-2:30 PM at Front and Tusculum Streets

Saturday--10:30 AM-12:30 PM at Health District Six at 3rd Street and Girard Avenue. An afternoon site is offered from 1:30 PM-4:00 PM at 10th and Fairmount Streets

Clients can drop in the office or call any day to get information and referrals.

**For more information about Prevention Point Philadelphia call:
(215) 787-0118 or
e-mail ppped@critpath.org**

Spotlight on Chenita Johnson Frierson: RAP CAB

Chenita Johnson Frierson is the newest member of the Project RAP Community Advisory Board. She was accepted onto the CAB in May after attending CAB meetings for six months. Ms. Frierson is an Addictions Counselor in the Intensive Out-Patient (IOP) program at North Philadelphia Health System, at 8th and Girard. She previously worked with methadone clients and now works with forensic clients, who are court-stipulated to be in drug rehabilitation. Clients in the IOP program attend group meetings three times a week and meet with Ms. Frierson individually once a week. Ms. Frierson monitors each patient's progress in relation to their treatment plan and assesses the development of their peer relationships within the group setting.

Before becoming an Addictions Counselor, Ms. Frierson worked as a counselor for Good Will in South Carolina, working with people with disabilities. Good Will's primary purpose is to hire people with disabilities and place them in work situations where they can use their skills. Ms. Frierson worked with clients who had various physical and mental disabilities, helping them to find employment and lead more independent lifestyles.

Ms. Frierson moved to Philadelphia two and a half years ago when she married her husband who is a licenced Certified Public Accountant. She found out about the Community Advisory Board through a co-worker at North Philadelphia Health System who talked to her about the CAB and the various Project RAP research studies. Ms. Frierson, who is dedicated to helping others, thought that being part of the CAB would be a great opportunity to help people at risk for HIV/AIDS and contribute to the community. Some of Ms. Frierson's client's were eligible for a Project RAP study, and after finding out more about the study, she referred several clients to the Project. She talked with CAB member JoAnn Williams and began attending meetings. She found the meetings interesting and informative and often passed out literature she received from the CAB to members of her work team at the Health System.

Ms. Frierson would like to see more public discussion about HIV/AIDS research and how individuals and communities can contribute, both in this country and abroad. She says, "It's sad how alot of countries don't care about people with HIV and don't do anything for them."

Spotlight on Janice Myers: RAP Staff

Janice Myers has worked for Project RAP for almost three years. Ms. Myers is a research technician who does phlebotomy, risk reduction counseling, interviews, and participant outreach. She has worked on numerous studies including VPS II, NEP, Substance P, LTLI, the Rapid Assessment Study for the Congressional Black Caucus, and WomenFIT. For the VPS II study, she was the sole technician working with Annet Davis-Vogel on the study which looked at HIV risk factors for women who smoke crack cocaine. The study recruited 100 women and followed them for one year. The study had a 97.5% follow-up rate, continuing Project RAP's excellent track record for working with difficult-to-follow populations.

Before coming to work for Project RAP, Ms. Myers was a supervisor for a program providing services to emotionally disturbed and mentally handicapped adolescents. She also works part-time for Thomas Jefferson University as a house manager at a facility for recovering mothers and their children.

Ms. Myers is a single parent of a beautiful daughter, Tahira, and the proud grandmother of two grandsons, Aquil and Kareem, aged 5 and 2.

Ms. Myers is currently working towards her bachelors degree in psychology at

Community College of Philadelphia, and will transfer to the University of Pennsylvania's College of General Studies in January. Ms. Myers currently spends most of her time at the RAP Office at 5th and Girard. Of her job she says, "I feel blessed, pleased, and grateful to be involved in HIV research because I lost a loved one to HIV. At that time I wanted to know all I could about the disease. About four years later I entered the field of HIV research and one of my goals is to acquire as much information as possible and to help those who are at risk and/or already infected with HIV."



Chenita Johnson Frierson



Janice Myers

RAP CAB

Co-Chair:

Valeria Simpson

Co-Chair:

David Metzger

Secretary:

Thelma Henry

Sergeant at Arms:

JoAnn Williams

Sergeant at Arms:

Lawrence Savage

Members:

Rosalie Branch

Margaret Brown

Susan Carnett

Chenita Frierson

Emanuel Hamilton

Drew Kearney

Cecelia Laurenzi

Gaylord Mercer

Bobbi O'Donnell

Lora Pearson

Kathy Rigby

Patricia Shields

Sondra Smith

Charles Tucker

Community Resources Free Legal Services in Philadelphia

CIVIL LEGAL ISSUES

Community Legal Services Main Office

1424 Chestnut Street

Phila., PA 19102

(215) 981-3700

Community Legal Services

Law Center North Central

3638 North Broad Street

Phila., PA 19140

(215) 227-2400

Phila. Legal Assistance

1424 Chestnut Street

Phila., PA 19101

(215) 981-3800

Phila. Volunteers for the Indigent Project

215-523-9550

Women's Law Project

(212) 928-9511

(telephone counseling and referral only)

IF YOU ARE HOMELESS OR FACING HOMELESSNESS

Homeless Advocacy
Project

(215) 523-9595 or

(877) 435-7755

DOMESTIC VIO- LENCE

Woman Against Abuse

Legal Center

100 South Broad Street

5th Floor

Phila. PA 19110

(215) 686-7082

CRIMINAL LEGAL ISSUES

Defender Association of Phila. (Public Defender)

70 N. 17th Street

Phila., PA 19103

(215) 568-3190

FOR HEALTH CARE LEGAL ISSUES

Pennsylvania Health Law Project

924 Cherry Street

Phila. PA 19107

(215) 625-3663

FOR PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S EDU- CATION IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL

Education Law Center

1315 Walnut Street

Suite 400

Phila. PA 19107

(215) 238-6970 (voice)

(215) 238-5892 (TTY)

HIV/AIDS LEGAL ISSUES

AIDS Law Project

1211 Chestnut Street

Suite 1200

Phila. PA 19107

(215) 587-9377

IMMIGRATION ISSUES

HIAS and Council Migration Service

2100 Arch Street

3rd Floor

Phila. PA 19103

(215) 823-0900

Nationalities Service Center

1300 Spruce Street

Phila. PA 19107

(215) 893-8400

LAWYER REFERRALS

Lawyer Referral and Information Service

1101 Market Street

Phila. PA 19107

(215) 238-6333

(for fee generating cases only)

FOR HELP WITH A DISABILITY

Disabilities Law Project

1315 Walnut Street, Suite 400

Phila., PA 19107

(215) 238-8070 (voice)

(215) 238-6069 (TDD)

Legal Clinic for the Disabled

1513 Race Street

Phila., PA 19102

(215) 587-3350 (voice)

(215) 587-3352 (TDD)

Quote of the Month.

**"You cannot teach a man any-
thing; you can only help him to
find it for himself."**

Galileo Galilei



University of Pennsylvania
Project RAP
Raising Awareness About
Public Health

**To Contact Project RAP
Call Toll Free:
1-800-528-5527**