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Brigham and Women’s Hospital HIV Vaccine Trials Unit: Using Research to Engage Communities in HIV Prevention

Teress Votto  
*Brigham and Women’s Hospital*

Kathleen Krause  
*Brigham and Women’s Hospital*

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Brigham and Women’s Hospital HIV Vaccine Trials Unit: Using Research to Engage Communities in HIV Prevention

Teress Votto, Community Outreach and Education Coordinator & Kathleen Krause, MSc, Clinical Research Project Manager, Email: vaccines@partners.org

Who we are
A unit of physicians, nurses and research staff performing clinical trials research in order to find a safe and effective HIV vaccine. We strive to:
- Increase the visibility of our HIV vaccine research studies within the Boston community as an:
  - Educational resource
  - Community advocate
  - Clinical research site
- Promote our academic and humanitarian mission through:
  - Leading and contributing to discussions about HIV
  - Making connections within scientific, student, and activist communities

Our collaborators include:
Scientific/research partners:
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC)
- Fenway Health
- HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN)
- International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI)
- The Ragon Institute
- Division of AIDS (DAIDS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Community partners:
- AIDS Action Committee
- Boston Public Health Commission
- Boston University School of Public Health
- Harvard Center for AIDS Research (CFAR)
- Harvard Institute for Global Health
- Latino Health Institute
- Male Center
- Multicultural AIDS Coalition- Boston
- TransCEND

Transgender women focus group
- Focus group held in early 2011: exploring barriers and facilitators to participation in clinical trials/vaccine research
- Feedback from the participants highlighted a need for community:
  - “I honestly know nothing about how these vaccines work. I understand the reason why they’re doing them. I just don’t understand how they work. ”

Transgender women and HIV
- CDC cites transgender communities as among the groups at highest risk for infection in US
- Meta-analysis of 29 studies suggested that 27.7% of transgender women are HIV-positive
- One study found that up to 73% of HIV-positive transgender women were unaware of their HIV status

Outreach Challenges
- Mistrust
  - Government investigators
  - Stigma
    - Associated with HIV
    - Associated with vaccine
  - Health concerns
    - Contracting HIV
    - Ineligibility for vaccine that works
- Vaccine-induced long-term complications (e.g.
  - Health insurance
  - International travel
  - Immigration
  - Blood donation

Engaging the community
- Plan and attend events that focus on raising awareness about HIV/AIDS in general community and events that target scientific community
- Where there are gaps in programming, create our own HIV vaccine awareness/recruitment campaigns
- Collaborating with group leaders in your community of interest allows you to:
  - Establish connections
  - Learn about research issues within the community
  - Find legitimacy and support for your efforts
- Access and engage community members in a meaningful way
- Support organizations that address HIV-related issues: GLBT rights, domestic violence, health disparities
- Online canvassing through use of social media: Facebook, Craigslist, college websites

My “T” Matters Campaign
- Focus on transgender women
- Creation of trans-specific ads with local members of the transgender community

Currently Looking For:
Transgender Women who are between 18-50 years old, HIV negative
- A healthy who can take actions by volunteering for an HIV Vaccine Research Study
- Participants must be able to come to study visits at least for 1 year.
- All participants receive confidential HIV-counseling and testing at no cost.
- Compensation also provided.

FACT: You cannot get HIV from participating in an HIV Vaccine Research Study.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/transgender/