

Message from the Director

Harlem ... It's time to make some noise!



There is a thief among us, stealing something more precious than silver and gold—our health and well-being. High blood pressure (hypertension) not only steals, but kills as well—targeting elders and young adults alike. This “silent

killer” fires no warning shots before it destroys key vital organs such as the kidney, brain and heart.

Research shows that people of color are more likely to have high blood pressure—and less likely to have it under control. While many individuals have not been checked for high blood pressure, those who do know that they have “pressure” are not getting it under control through a combination of healthy lifestyle changes and, in some cases, medication.

HHPC, along with many of our community and public health partners, has begun a five-year initiative to screen Harlem residents for high blood pressure and then provide education and linkages to care at local health centers, while also providing personalized education and support to manage their condition.

As a community, we need to “make some noise” in order to oust this “silent killer” from our midst. For more information on controlling hypertension, visit our website (www.GetHealthyHarlem.org).

To participate in our project, Support for Hypertension Awareness, Reduction and Education (SHARE), please contact Michelle Smith, Project Coordinator at mes2163@columbia.edu or 646-284-9740. 🌐

Alwyn T. Cohall, MD, is the Director of the Harlem Health Promotion Center



Innovative video see page 6

What's Inside

HHPC collaborations	2		
Healthy Monday Campaign			
Healthy food access	2	Message from the CAB chair	5
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)		HHPC staff updates	5
Community workshops	3	Introductions	
Promoting healthy relationships		CAB updates	5
Publications	3	Newcomers and newsmakers	
Peer-reviewed journal articles		In the news	6
Awards	4	SEX::TECH Conference, Cells in Da Hood My Life, My Decision	
Staff, CAB and students		Student spotlight	7
Grants	4	Online health communications skills	
Funding news			

HHPC helps start a CSA in Northern Manhattan

HHPC has partnered with Community Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) and several other community organizations in Washington Heights to start the Tierra Direct Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) site at CCPH (178th Street and Fort Washington Avenue).

Every week from June 17 to November 4 this year, Tierra Direct CSA members will pick up a variety of delicious locally-grown, organic vegetables; attend cooking classes; go on a farm trip; meet their farmer; and engage in other educational events to learn about healthy eating and the benefits of supporting local agriculture.

CSA is one way for communities with little access to healthy food to afford top-quality organic vegetables while also supporting local farmers.

How does it work? A community group works directly with a local farmer to purchase produce that the farmer delivers to their site each week.

To get matched up with a farmer and gain technical support, Tierra Direct worked with Just Food, a NYC-based non-profit organization that helps bring healthy, locally-grown food into communities here. Members pay the farmer at the beginning of the season for a “share” of produce so that the farmer can buy fertilizer, seeds, etc. without taking out large interest-bearing loans.

continued on pg. 8



The Goshen, NY farm where the Tierra Direct vegetables come from

HHPC Collaborations

Healthy Monday Campaign

HHPC partners with Healthy Monday to get Harlem healthy

Healthy Monday (HM) is a national movement to get people to start and stick with healthy behaviors that can help control chronic, preventable diseases like diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. HM’s goal is to reduce the impact of these diseases by offering a weekly reminder to start and stick with healthy goals—something that its collaboration with HHPC aims to bolster in Northern Manhattan.

The idea for HM started in 2005, when advertising executive and marketer, Sid Lerner, compared the number of violent deaths regularly reported by the media with the number of deaths caused by diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes. He found that there were actually more deaths caused by preventable, chronic diseases like these than those caused by accidents, violent crime and other causes. Lerner decided that lifestyle changes on a mass scale was needed to save lives. He began collaborating with academic institutions and organizations to create the spark needed to fuel this mass movement.

HM began as a project of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia

University, in association with Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Syracuse University Newhouse School of Public Communications. HM’s many campaigns focus on reducing meat consumption (Meatless Monday), increasing physical activity (Move it Monday) and smoking cessation (Quit and Stay Quit Monday) to name a few initiatives.

HM’s recent collaboration with HHPC is helping Northern Manhattan residents learn more about getting healthy by adding HM messages and activities into their lives. A related component encourages enhanced screening to identify and treat a variety of health conditions. This campaign is focusing on high school and college students and faith-based institutions. Additionally, staff, parents and children involved in daycare, charter school, and after-school programs will be engaged as well.

The vision for the initiative will be to turn Northern Manhattan into a “Healthy Monday” community where everyone becomes inspired by the motto, “Monday—the day all health breaks loose!”

continued on pg. 8



More HHPC support for CSA!



HHPC Community Advisory Board (CAB) member, **Debra Jackson**, is one of the volunteers to start the Grace CSA at a West 139th Street church in Harlem.

“Grace CSA is in a residential area that has no major grocery stores within a quarter mile radius,” says Jackson. “Having a farmer come to our site with fresh vegetables is a real bonus.”

To learn more, contact gracechurchcsa@yahoo.com.

Community Workshops

Project STAY on the move

Promoting healthy relationships

This past February marked the first observance of Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. The New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence started a campaign to encourage teens to recognize abusive behavior and to learn more about it.

As part of this effort, Project STAY's* Mobile Health Team (MHT) provided workshops focused on teen dating violence, homophobia, and sexual health to high school students at the Gotham Professional Arts Academy in Brooklyn and Urban Assembly High School for Performing Arts in Harlem (see box at right on school staff response). These workshops were facilitated by three MHT health educators, all graduate students at Columbia University's Mailman



MHT Health Educator, Julen Harris, presents to Facing History High School students

School of Public Health: Kirby Bumpus, Maria Papadimitriou and Jolene Lalas.

"The MHT mission is to provide education, prevention, testing and treatment to young people for STIs and HIV in NYC," says Renee Cohall, LCSW-R, ACSW, who oversees the MHT. "We offered these workshops as a way to

address the urgency of teen dating violence which is a silent epidemic. According to Break the Cycle, a leading non-profit organization addressing teen dating violence, one in three teens will experience abuse in a dating relationship and

more than two thirds of them will never report it to anyone."

For more information on teen dating violence go to breakthecycle.org.

*Project STAY is HHPC's service arm and is funded by the New York State Department of Health and the Robin Hood Foundation.

Publications

Cohall AT, Dini S, Nye A, Dye B, Neu N, Hyden C. HIV Testing Preferences Among Young Men of Color Who Have Sex With Men. *American Journal of Public Health*. In press. Published ahead of print on January 14, 2010.

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Johnson R, Nshom M, Nye A, Cohall A. There's always Plan B: Adolescent knowledge, attitudes and intention to use emergency contraception. *Contraception*. 81 (2010); 128-132.

Khan S, Ancker J, Li J, Kaufman D, Hutchinson C, Cohall A, Kukafka R. GetHealthyHarlem.org: Developing a Web Platform for Health Promotion and Wellness Driven by and for the Harlem Community. *AMIA Annu Symp Proc* 2009; 2009:317-321. Published online 2009 November 14.

MHT workshop feedback

"Gotham Professional Arts Academy in Brooklyn invited the Project STAY Mobile Health Team (MHT) to participate in our Respect for All Day. We wanted to focus on respect for self and others, our community, and our right to be respected by others. The MHT presented on STI prevention and gave students the opportunity to be tested. I know that many kids who would otherwise go untested got tested. I also know that many students who have questions about sexual decision-making, pregnancy, STIs, and various other topics were able to ask those questions in a private and safe environment with a qualified counselor. This could potentially save a young person's life. The work that Project STAY does is so important."

Shelby Mitchell, Social Worker, Gotham Professional Arts Academy in Brooklyn



MHT fast facts

Each year:

- MHT provides 1,500 youth with sexual health information and risk-reduction workshops
- 700 youth attending MHT workshops voluntarily request additional counseling and screening for sexually-transmitted infections and HIV

continued on pg. 7

Awards



Nye (at left) with Dean Linda P. Fried

■ **Andrea Nye**, HHPC's Director of Programs and Evaluation, is one of seven recipients of Columbia University's 2010 Mailman School of Public Health annual Staff Award for Excellence. These awards are made possible by a generous gift from an anonymous donor to recognize outstanding Mailman School employees who demonstrate the highest standards of excellence and extraordinary performance.

■ **Carly Hutchinson**, Director of Communications and Community Relations, **Michelle Smith**, Project Coordinator, **Andrea Nye**, Director of Programs and Evaluation, and **Dr. Alwyn Cohall**, HHPC Director, were authors on two award-winning posters focusing on the development of the GetHealthyHarlem.org website and the use of graduate students to build organizational capacity and promote service learning. The

posters were presented at the 11th Annual Community-Campus Partnerships for Health Conference May 12-15, 2010 in Portland, Oregon, where they were granted a Third Place "viewers choice" award based on the votes of conference participants.



Watkins-Bryant (at left) and Hanif Shabazz

■ **Hanif Shabazz**, HHPC Community Advisory Board (CAB) member, received the third "Trail Blazer Award" based on his work in the film industry. The award was presented by the Harriet Tubman Humanitarian Achievement Awards Jubilee, Inc. after being nominated by **Goldie Watkins-Bryant**, also an HHPC CAB member. Mr. Shabazz's work includes the award-winning educational film *My Life, My Decision*, a film created for HHPC to educate youth about emergency contraception and acknowledged at the Tribeca Film Festival on March 27th, 2010. Mr. Shabazz has

over 30 years of experience in the film and television industry and is currently the Executive Producer of Light/Action Productions.

■ Several of HHPC's collaborating Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health graduate students won Awards of Excellence for their Master's theses: **Melody Hsiou**, "The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act," Policy Review Article (SMS Thesis Award Recipient); **Laura Shulman**, "Incorporating Risk Reduction Counseling as a Standard of Care in Obstetrics-Gynecology Offices," Research Proposal (Honorable Mention); **Colleen Kapsimalis**, "Going Against the Grain: An Intervention to Increase Screening of Celiac Disease in the United States," Intervention Proposal (Notable for Excellence); **Jennifer Pehr**, "Barriers and Facilitators to Pregnant and Parenting Teens' Ability to Access Educational Opportunities in New York City," Research Report, (Notable for Excellence); **Dana Smiles**, "Integrating Traditional Medicine and Western Biomedical Practices for HIV Treatment in Southwest Burkina Faso: Exploring the Potential for a Multi-faceted and Culturally Relevant Intervention Planning Model," Research Proposal (Notable for Excellence). 🌐

Grants

■ The 2009 Columbia Community Service Grant was awarded to **Project STAY's Joanna Pudil and Alexandra Christopher** to create a documentary film about the stories of five HIV+ youth, with the goal of changing the face of HIV while simultaneously serving as a therapeutic tool for the adolescents involved. The film will be completed by October 2010. Additional funding will allow five more client profiles to be created in 2011.

■ In the spring of 2010, **Project STAY's Mobile Health Team (MHT)** received

continued funding from the Robin Hood Foundation. The MHT is an outreach program that engages behaviorally high-risk youth in sexual health education through group workshops, individualized and tailored counseling, and STI/HIV testing and follow-up care.

■ With renewed funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HHPC is developing a program to reduce high blood pressure in Harlem over the next four years. The project, called **Support for Hypertension Awareness, Reduction and Education**

(SHARE), utilizes web and print-based educational materials, guided instruction and support from a qualified health professional to help participants reduce blood pressure. Harlem residents have higher rates of hypertension than the American population generally, and hypertension can lead to a variety of serious health problems, including stroke, kidney and heart diseases, which affect Harlem residents at alarming rates. 🌐

HHPC Staff Updates

Introductions



Yuan (Vivian) Zhang, M.S., Data Manager

is responsible for maintaining HHPC databases and analyzing data for a variety

of on-going research projects. She is also a skilled web programmer and is helping to update and revise both the Project STAY website and the center-wide HHPC website. Ms. Zhang received her MS in Applied Statistics from Columbia University.

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Katie K. Tang, MA, CHES, Mobile Health Team Outreach Coordinator

is responsible for coordinating and implement-

ing Project STAY's Mobile Health Team (MHT) outreach events. She interacts with outreach agencies and helps train student educators. Ms. Tang received her MA in Health Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

kkt2115@columbia.edu

Message from the CAB Chair



The Upper Manhattan Mental Health Center, where I am Executive Director, has hosted a very successful health fair for nearly a

decade. The fair offers screenings for blood pressure, diabetes, depression, cholesterol, HIV and other conditions, and provides important linkages to health care. Last year we screened over 250 attendees, of which 50 percent required follow-up. Like many health fairs in Northern Manhattan, we are often attendees' only point of contact with health services—from accessing screenings to learning about available resources, like where to find a doctor or obtain healthcare coverage if they are uninsured.

As HHPC launches its Support for Hypertension Awareness, Reduction and Education (SHARE) Project this Fall, it is a great time for you to let HHPC know about health fairs and other community events where HHPC could recruit for this project. SHARE will offer some participants a chance to get intensive support in making important lifestyle changes to reduce and manage their high blood pressure.

A key learning from my work on health fairs has shown that providing screenings is not enough—helping Harlem residents manage their health has to be our goal. 🌟

William S. Witherspoon, Jr., LCSW is the Executive Director of the Upper Manhattan Mental Health Center, Inc.

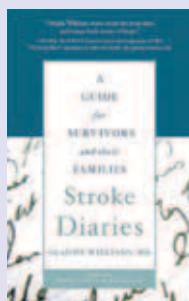
CAB Updates

HHPC's newest CAB members



Welcome to HHPC's newest CAB members: **Verna Fitzpatrick** (not pictured), MS, Administrator, Northern Manhattan Rehabilitation and Nursing Center; **Donna R. Williams** (back row second), DDS, FIND, Owner, President, Morning-side Dental Care, PC; **Olajide Williams, MD** (back row last), Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurology, Columbia University; Assistant Attending, Department of Neurology, Columbia University, Harlem Hospital Center.

CAB members in the news



Congratulations to one of our newest CAB members, **Dr. Olajide Williams**, on the publication of his first book, **Stroke Diaries: A Guide for Survivors and their Families**.

A series of thoughtful narratives followed by authorial comments, the book describes stroke signs and symptoms,

the science behind the disease, and the importance of acting quickly.

Each chapter describes a patient's experience with stroke. The lessons drawn from each story can inspire and educate stroke survivors, family members, medical professionals and the community at large.

This intimate look at stroke in our community highlights the need for and importance of stroke education in Harlem.

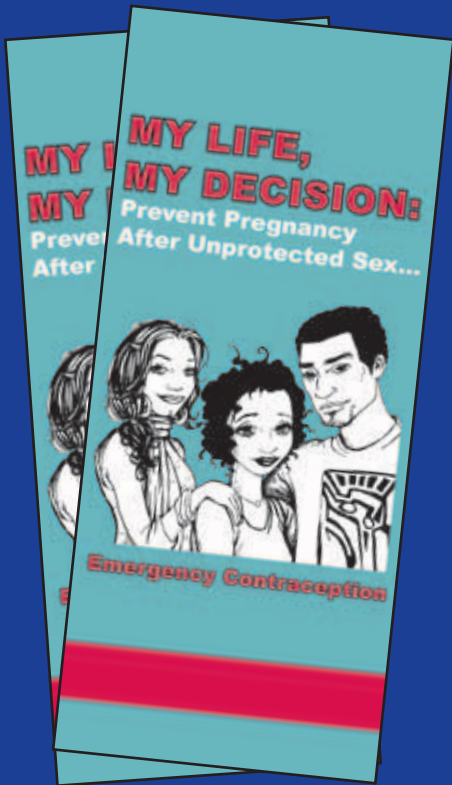
About HHPC

HHPC is a collaboration of community, academic, and public health stakeholders that uses research, education, and service delivery to improve the health and well-being of the Harlem community.

HHPC is one of 37 Prevention Research Centers funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. For more information, visit healthyharlem.org.

My Life, My Decision: Shown in Tribeca

On Saturday, March 27, 2010 the video, "My Life, My Decision" was featured at the Teen Health & Wellness Film Festival at the Tribeca Cinemas. The festival was sponsored by the Young Women of Color HIV/AIDS Coalition, in partnership with HEAT (Health & Education Alternatives for Teens). The festival's goal was to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, and to empower adolescents to find out their HIV status. Katie Tang, Mobile Health Team (MHT) Outreach Coordinator, and Hanif Shabazz, HHPC CAB member and producer, both attended the event and participated on the guest panel to address participants' questions regarding the film's production and potential collaboration with HHPC's MHT. ☺



HHPC launches first of "Cells in Da Hood" video series

In the past few years, HHPC has begun making use of digital media to educate young people 14-24 years of age about sexual health. Reaching youth networks through this medium has become easier with widespread access to the Internet and mobile technologies. The center's latest digital media project targeting urban teens and young adults is "Cells in Da Hood," a series of five-minute computer animated vignettes depicting phone text conversations between young

people. The topic of conversation: Sexual health issues such as condom utilization and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing. The goal of each vignette is to provide clear information about sexual health, including dispelling myths and fears, as well as how to access HHPC's Project STAY services.

As culturally-and age-appropriate sexual health promotional materials are not readily available for adolescents and young adults, the "Cells in Da Hood" video series has an edge on reaching urban teens and young adults.

According to HHPC's Director, Dr. Alwyn Cohall, this population is at a greater risk for contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

This prototype for the video series has been evaluated in eight focus groups by

50 teens who participate in several NYC community-based organizations who partner with HHPC. "Based on this research," says Kirby Bumpus, an MPH graduate of the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health,

who oversaw the focus group process for HHPC, "the video has been updated and dramatically improved."

Focus groups showed that "Cells in Da Hood" appealed to many of the youth who participated. "One youth commented, at first I thought the video was whack, but as I watched it, I became interested and it turned out to be funny and informative." Another young viewer said, "The video was motivating, it seems easy to get to the [Project STAY] clinic and get things done." ☺



Phone texting promotes sexual health

San Francisco SEX::TECH Conference highlights sexual health innovation

HHPC was one of the featured innovators presenting at the Sex::Tech Conference in February 2010. This conference explored available tools and methods for reaching youth with culturally appropriate STD/HIV prevention and sex education interventions. Technology developers, accidental techies, educators, researchers, youth, public health professionals, and activists were among the participants.

HHPC's "Cells in Da Hood" video was featured in the "Innovation" session category entitled "Bridging the Digital Divide: Reaching Urban Youth." This session focused on three "exemplary" programs that used social media, digital video and mobile social networks to reach youth at risk.

For more information on this innovative conference see sextech.org


Student Spotlight

Students gain real-life skills

Attaining practical skills to effectively engage in community-based public health, social work, pharmacy, biomedical informatics, nutrition, community health education or direct medical service interventions is a keen challenge for graduate students whose coursework often provides theoretical background, but little opportunity to apply this knowledge in practical ways. This is the first in a series of articles on how students can gain valuable experience at the Harlem Health Promotion Center (HHPC).

Working on a community health website

HHPC's groundbreaking website, GetHealthyHarlem.org (GHH), was developed through a five-year grant funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in partnership with Columbia's Department of Biomedical Informatics. Developing a website that offers both social networking capabilities as well as hundreds of original community-focused articles has been a huge undertaking that could not have been accomplished without student involvement.

HHPC's rigorous hands-on, skills-building program allows students from diverse fields (public health, health informatics, nutrition, health promotion, journalism, public relations and pharmacy) to learn firsthand about

developing promotional materials and social marketing programs, how to create accessible, culturally-relevant online content, how to engage community members and conduct qualitative research, as well as how to develop methods for evaluating research data. Some are currently assisting with the roll-out of a new research project using the website to disseminate information about hypertension reduction.

Outcomes: Everybody wins

Student collaborations have had transformative effects for HHPC, "With the help of nearly 30 students over the past four years," says Carly Hutchinson, Director of Communications and Community Relations at HHPC, "we have been able to populate the website with hundreds of plain-language health education articles, blogs, and event postings that have been shaped by a continuous dialogue with community members, organizational partners and local health experts."

The perspective is also positive for those in academia who place students in internships or community service experiences. "HHPC's work is central to the School of Public Health," says Ian Lapp, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Education at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. "We believe deeply in this center as it has had a profound effect on many students. At HHPC students get to apply



Touro College of Pharmacy Students

the theories and methods they learn in the classroom while also making a difference in the community. Students who intern at HHPC show a high level of commitment that extends beyond the typical practicum experience."

HHPC has also provided some students with a whole new perspective on their careers.

"Working on GetHealthyHarlem.org helped me build important skills in health literacy, community engagement, and effective team work. I now want to work in health communications," says Laura Shulman, an MPH graduate of Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health.

To find out more about student opportunities with GetHealthyHarlem.org, contact Carly Hutchinson at clh47@columbia.edu.



Publications, continued from pg. 3

Cohall AT, Dini S, Nye A, Dye B, Neu N, Hyden C. HIV Testing Preferences Among Young Men of Color Who Have Sex With Men. *American Journal of Public Health*. In press. Published ahead of print on January 14, 2010.

Cohall AT, Nye A, Moon-Howard J, Kukafka R, Dye B, Vaughan RD, Northridge M. Computer Use, Internet Access, and Online Searching for Health Information among Harlem Adults.

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Web Platform for Health Promotion and Wellness Driven by and for the Harlem Community. *AMIA Annu Symp Proc* 2009; 2009:317-321. Published online 2009 November 14.

Kukafka R, Khan S, Kaufman D, Mark J. An Evidence-based Decision Aid to Help Patients Set Priorities for Selecting Among Multiple Health Behaviors. *AMIA Annu Symp Proc*. 2009; 2009:

continued on pg. 8

CSA, continued from pg. 2

What does it cost and what do you get? An average unsubsidized share usually costs about \$400 per season/\$20 per week. Each member gets eight to 12 types of vegetables each week. Members choose their own portions of vegetables. Shares are sold in the winter and spring for each grow-

ing season. To learn more about CSAs in New York City and find one in your neighborhood go to <http://www.justfood.org/csaloc/search>.

Can CSA be affordable to very low-income members?

Tierra Direct offers two different share prices—one

a little higher to “subsidize” the shares of other members who meet certain income criteria. It also has a payment plan for subsidized shareholders. Next year, Tierra Direct will also accept Food Stamps.

More information about Tierra Direct: Contact Columbia

Community Partnerships for Health (646-697-2274) or Tierradirectcsa@gmail.com.

More information about CSAs: Visit Justfood.org and GetHealthyHarlem.org. 🌐

Publications, continued from pg. 3

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Li J, Khan S, Mark J, Nivarthi P, Misra R, Chan C, Kaufman D, Kukafka R. TLC: An Informatics Approach to

Enable Patients to Initiate Tailored Lifestyle Conversations with Providers at the Point of Care. AMIA Annu Symp Proc. 2009; 2009: 364–368. Published online 2009 November 14. 🌐

Healthy Monday, continued from pg. 2

To learn more about HM, visit their site at www.healthymonday.org or see

www.GetHealthyHarlem.org or contact Michael Hernandez at 917-841-6617. 🌐

H A R L E M
HEALTH REPORT

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