



Strength in Numbers

Colorado

<http://www.strengthinnumbers.org/>

The Official Newsletter for the Colorado Chapter of Strength in Numbers

Winter 2009
Volume I, Issue IV

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Strength In Numbers is to provide social support and educational resources to HIV+ gay men around the world thereby helping to improve their quality of life, quality of health and their ability to help others. Our activities include operation of an interactive Internet-based communications system, development of programs that increase self-esteem and social interaction skills, organization and guidance of activities that increase physical abilities, and promoting volunteer opportunities by our members in HIV-related efforts including fundraising for treatment services and research (such as AIDS Walks and the California AIDS Life/Cycle) and HIV prevention campaigns.

<http://www.strengthinnumbers.org/>



WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN?

By Marshall Gourley, Health Program Administrator, Denver Health

After months of remodeling, the Infectious Disease (ID) Clinic has returned to its home at Denver Public Health on the corner of 6th Ave and Bannock. And whoever said that you can't go back home again was just plain wrong. We have gone home again, but how the home has changed!

Improvements

Client care, comfort, and confidentiality were the goals in the redesign of the ID Clinic and as soon as the elevator doors open on the fifth floor of the 6th and Bannock building visitors will encounter a space that is warm and welcoming.

Our registration and waiting areas provide privacy and comfort, and the client exam rooms all have windows offering views of either the Denver skyline or the Rocky Mountains. In addition to those things all In-clinic procedures and therapies are now provided in dedicated spaces that have been incorporated into the clinic's redesign.

(Continued on page 8)



CROI CONFERENCE UPDATE

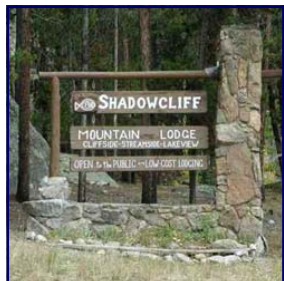
Nowadays, there are a dozen or more annual HIV conferences around the world. Some are major, some are minor, but the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) is considered the "granddaddy" of them all. The 16th annual CROI will be held February 8-12 in Montreal, Canada. With nearly 4000 attendees, the four day event has a packed agenda each day from 8:30am-6pm. Typically, the conference has two major lectures, eight plenary lectures, nine symposia, 86 oral abstract presentations, over 900 poster presentations, 10 poster discussion groups, and 22 "Late Breaker" sessions.

For more information on the conference, including the program agenda and videocasts from previous years, visit: www.retroconference.org

You can use the same website to experience the conference via telecasts.

NOTE: Doctors Steve Johnson and Tom Campbell will present highlights from the conference at the regular monthly Community Educational Forum on Tuesday March 10, 2009 (free dinner 6pm, forum 6:30pm, Our Saviors community room, 9th & Emerson)

2009 RETREATS AT SHADOW- CLIFF



The dates for the 2009 HIV Retreats at Shadowcliff will be **July 9-12** and **August 13-16**. If you would like more information about the retreat, or would like your name on the list to receive a registration form in the spring, send an e-mail to:

Shadowcliff@hotmail.com

or call Michael at 303.587.0233. More information is also available at:

www.shadowcliffretreat.blogspot.com

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLET- TER?

The S.I.N. Newsletter is a quarterly publication and welcomes submissions from anyone on anything HIV-related. Deadlines are usually a few weeks prior to publication. We appreciate articles that have a maximum length of 500-600 words. All submissions are subject to editing for length and clarity.

Send articles or ideas to:

rebuilt-denver@yahoo.com

Put "Newsletter" in the subject line.

SIN IN THE CITY

Hope for the New Year

It's almost difficult to believe that we have come through our first full year as a publication. It has been a joyful and energizing ride. We are learning a lot as we go, and hopefully connecting some dots within our own community. What a year it has been. The election of Obama was a time that most of us will never forget. At least I hope I never do. I felt a flood of hope wash over me as I watched and I started to believe again that my life (and our lives) could change.

Speaking of hope, I want to thank the entire community for participating in an awareness raising and gift drive for our own local HOPE program. There are a couple of articles about this fantastic program in this issue (pp. 6 & 13). This is a service that impacts some of our lives quietly yet heroically. I love to stop by and visit, cuz there's always a warm smile and sometimes Faye is serving up her homemade coffeecake.

With regard to change, however, there is much on our poz Denver metro horizon. Our partners at CAP have gone through a major staffing change and we look forward to new energy. The Planning Council has submitted its new Proposed Comprehensive Plan for the next three years and there are indeed changes to the mechanics as well as the focus. But moreover there is a change in leadership at The Planning Council with the addition of Maria Lopez as the Coordinator. The mood has shifted at those meetings and I have felt a renewed sense of enthusiasm as more PWA's seem to be included in their process. A new HIV website has debuted whose press release is included here (p. 4) Please visit it often.

If you are newly poz, don't drive yourself crazy worrying about everything that could happen. Come ask some people who have been around and get an insider's view. It could save you a lot of unnecessary stress. Or call The NET (p.4) and be part of that support network. There are quotes in an article here that indicate its impact.

A working group (Rebuilt +) from The Planning Council, made up of local poz individuals, is bringing peer-led self management trainings to our city (p.9). It's a pretty bold undertaking and has support from the city as well as the state. This hopefully will herald back an atmosphere of community, success, and information-sharing among us that is so vital in living well.

I hope you have had as much fun as we have this year. And I hope it continues in 2009. If you haven't had the chance to stop by a brunch, or pot luck, or an educational forum, or a happy hour, please do so. We welcome you to get involved, join the fun, and resurrect hope in your our own hearts.

February is a special month for community forums. On Thursday February 5th, Michael Van Essen from Pacific Clinics will come to Denver to share his expertise on benefits. He has been positive since 1985 and has worked as a benefits specialist in California since the mid-nineties. He has a vast knowledge of the initial application process for SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, and Medicare, and he specializes in retaining health care benefits when returning to work. He will conduct a community workshop on the evening of Feb 5th as well as a providers' workshop on Feb 6th. Watch for emails and flyers with more information.

—Rod



Living and Learning with HIV Program at the Mental Health Center of Denver

By Kimberly Zimmerman

As the new lead therapist for the Living and Learning with HIV (LLHIV) program, it has come to my attention that many members of the community are unaware of all the services we offer and how easy it is to take advantage of them. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly review the scope of services included in the LLHIV program and also introduce myself.

The LLHIV program offers mental health services for children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families who are infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in the Denver metro area. This means that partners, caregivers, family members, etc., who are HIV-negative are also eligible for services in this program. This program respects the cultural values and individual needs of the consumers; deaf and hard of hearing services are also available.

Ryan White grant funds are available as payor of last resort to cover fees for clients without benefits. This program accepts private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Program components:

- Individual and optional group therapy (DBT, Smoking Cessation, Wellness, Trauma Recovery, Relapse Prevention, Anger Management, and many more)
- Psychiatric medications and care, as appropriate
- Care coordination with the greater medical community
- Consultation and education
- Access to other MHCD services including but not limited to housing subsidy programs, employment counseling, educational programs, and the resource center.



A little about me: I am a Denver psychotherapist with personal and professional experience in the HIV/AIDS community. I received my degree from Naropa University in Boulder,

and completed training as a psychotherapist at Colorado AIDS Project (CAP). I am currently involved in private practice, Hep C Connection, and continue to be involved with CAP. On a personal note, I enjoy cooking, yoga, my two wonderful dogs, and the incredible natural beauty of Colorado. I also look forward to working with you to achieve the level of wellness you are seeking!

If you have further questions or would like to speak with me in person, feel free to call me at 303.504.1669, or email at:

Kimberly.Zimmerman@MHCD.org

You can also schedule an intake by calling the Access Team at 303.504.1250.

Hours are M - F 8am to 5pm. After hours crisis is the Mobile Crisis team of Denver Health Medical Center at 303.602.7220.

It's just better to know.

HIV+ males have a greater chance of being co-infected with **hepatitis C**. When you know, you know what to do. Get tested.

www.hepc-connection.org

Hep C connection

NEW HIV/HCV CO-INFECTION SUPPORT GROUP

What:

New free and open support group for newly diagnosed, long-term survivors, and everyone in between;

When:

The 4th Tuesday of each month, 5:30-7pm

Where:

1660 South Albion, 3rd Floor (near I-25 and Colorado Blvd.).

If interested in attending call Kim @ 303.862.0407.



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Whether someone needs to get tested, has been recently diagnosed, or has a loved one living with HIV, this new web site can help them find the resources they need in the Denver metro area.

-Denver Mayor, John

HIV RESOURCES PLANNING COUNCIL LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE

December 10, 2008 – The Denver HIV Resources Planning Council (DHRPC), a board established under the City & County of Denver, today launched their new web site, www.dhrpc.org. The new site is designed to help partners and members of the HIV and public health community learn more resources available for those impacted by HIV infection.

“Whether someone needs to get tested, has been recently diagnosed, or has a loved one living with HIV, this new web site can help them find the resources they need in the Denver metro area,” said Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper.

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado has more than 10,000 residents infected with HIV or AIDS.

The Denver HIV Resources Planning Council is a mayoral-appointed Board and Commission of the City and County of Denver, and a project of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center. The Council was established in 1993 when the cumulative AIDS cases exceeded 2000, making the Denver Transitional Grant Area (TGA) eligible for Ryan White Program funding.

“Visitors to the site will find easy access to information on participating providers, community events, frequently asked questions, Council data, reports, meetings and more,” said Maria Lopez, DHRPC Project Coordinator. “We’re thrilled to provide this wonderful new resource for the community.”

Former Mayor Wellington Webb created the Mayor’s Office of HIV Resources (MOHR) in 1994. MOHR is responsible for procuring, disbursing, and monitoring Ryan White CARE Act Title I funds and its share of Title II funds passed through the State of Colorado.

Contact Information:

Lynn Hough
City & County of Denver
Mayor’s Office of HIV Resources
lynn.hough@ci.denver.co.us

Maria Lopez
Program Coordinator
DHRPC
720-855-8641
Marial@dhrpc.org



The NET: Yes we can!

By Rick Smith

Change has been the constant theme in this past year’s political elections and it is also evident in the way HIV care is being handled both nationally and locally. Here in Denver one of the ways that change is evident is in the way those who are newly diagnosed with HIV are obtaining and getting support. The NET, a volunteer-run peer-support series for newly diagnosed Poz gay men has been an integral part of that change and has, since its inception last October, made a beneficial impact on the Poz community.

Begun as a collaborative effort between two long term Poz gay men who wanted to see a renewed effort in support for newly diagnosed gay men, The NET’s founders developed a curriculum based on existing protocol, personal experiences, and input received from many Poz guys over the years. The weekly groups focus on sharing what we have learned over the years and on addressing physical and emotional issues that may arise.

Initial support for The NET was provided by *Denver Infectious Disease Consultants* and we are now collaborating with the community-based organization, *It Takes A Village*. As we continue to grow, our hope is that we’ll be able to expand the number of groups offered as well as the number of venues.

The results of this initial group have exceeded my expectations. Let me share with you some of the comments from some of the participants. Who better to tell about the group than the guys themselves?

“Whenever Wednesday starts to roll around, I look forward to our NET meeting. It’s one of the few places I feel totally

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TWO HIV+ CRUISES IN 2009!

1st Annual SIN Cruise

May 3-10, 2009

Mexican Riviera

A 7-day cruise from Long Beach calling at Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan, & Cabo San Lucas, with 4 days at sea, on the very brand new Carnival Splendor (which will be less than one year old at the time of sailing).

Costs:

Cabin (no window) \$762; Cabin (with window) \$882; Cabin (with balcony) \$1052

Book immediately to guarantee these rates (which could increase at any time).

For more info or to book: www.sincruise.com



5th Annual Men's Poz Cruise

October 10-18, 2009:

Caribbean

An 8-day cruise from Ft Lauderdale calling at San Juan, St Thomas, Antigua, Tortola, & Nassau, with 2 days at sea, on the very new Carnival Freedom (their second newest ship entering service October 2007).

Costs:

Cabin (no window) \$790; Cabin (with window) \$910; Cabin (with balcony) \$1124

Book by March 1st to guarantee these rates.

For more info or to book: www.hivcruise.com

Please note (for both cruises):

- * We offer the most unique social and educational travel experience for people living with HIV. Have fun, make friends, meet special people, attend special seminars, lie on the beach or on deck with a Margarita in hand, swim & snorkel, rock climb, play miniature golf and experience the famed Carnival water slide.
- * Rates include all meals, private social events for our group, all cruise ship activities, and a \$100 per cabin (\$50 per person if shared) shipboard credit.
- * Singles will be matched with roommates (if desired). Single occupancy rates are higher.
- * These are regular cruises with several thousand passengers and all the regular cruise ship activities and entertainment are available. Our group has meals together as well as our own special events, activities, and parties.



Thanks to H.O.P.E.

By Clarence Mack, RN BSN

Drug addicted, in full blown AIDS and making a geographical change again. I arrived in Denver December 4, 2005. I began using and stayed with a friend in Aurora. Our relationship got bumpy (imagine that, two drug addicts having problems with each other) and I was out doing the sleazy dive motels up and down Colfax. I still hadn't reached my bottom. Eventually I got my own apartment and used and used. After only one year to the month of my arrival, I was evicted and homeless. This still wasn't enough. I talked about getting a job and re-summing my career, literally, a "pipe dream". I let my nursing license lapse. I eventually ended up in the court system, the best thing that could've happened. I saw the light. I met an angel at a place called the HOPE Program, a day shelter for people who are homeless and HIV positive. HOPE is an acronym for Homeless Outreach Pharmaceuticals and Education. The way I was helped by HOPE was multifaceted. It gave me structure and help with prioritizing my life. The HOPE Program has also grown. They now have a shower and cots.

There are also facilities to do laundry and get hot meals. The blessing is that the HOPE Program gave me a safe environment without judgment. I took the sound advice of several people: my probation officer, the judge in drug court, my psych. support staff, my counselor in the drug rehab program, and several people in two 12-step programs.

The HOPE Program helped me to see the importance of medication adherence, medical management and having a support system. I also belong to a community action group called Prevention Before Infection (PBI). I take people for HIV testing at *It Takes a Village* and *Brother Jeff's Health Initiative* with a focus on getting sex workers tested. I also volunteer at the HOPE Program, participate as a member of the Mayor's Planning Council, am an active member of Coloradans Working Together (CWT), and I do outreach for Addictions Research Treatment Services (ARTS).

I've come full circle. I made it through drug court, I joined the workforce again, I am able to make choices

as to my career. I think I've found direction in my life. I now do outreach and co facilitate a Healthy Relationships class. I do Alcoholics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous meetings daily. I'm working the 12 steps and have a sponsor in both groups. I also have had an undetectable viral load for a couple of years and decided to take the Hepatitis A and B vaccines. I am closer to a loving, full life. I'm still working on me and am thinking about having a significant other in my life.

I would like to profess my undying appreciation and unconditional love for Lisa Wheeler of the HOPE Program, and Roseann Prieto of ARTS. Those two have been directly responsible for helping me become closer to the person I want to be and giving me a great big universe.



NOTES FROM THE COLORADO STATE HIV CARE AND TREATMENT PROGRAM

By Todd Grove



Every few issues on the SIN newsletter, I try to let everyone know of changes in Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) programs that affect our community. There have been a few major developments that may relate to you in some way:

AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP)

CDPHE has removed the \$50,000 asset cap that has been in effect as a condition for ADAP eligibility. This means that if your savings for your old age previously disqualified you from enrolling in ADAP, you may now be eligible for assistance if you make less than 400% of Federal Poverty Level – (FPL) – currently \$41,600 for a single individual. If you have questions about this eligibility change, please contact Thelma Craig, the ADAP Coordinator at 303.692.2274. For enrollment questions, contact Enrollment Coordinator, Santos Rivera, at 303.692.2716.

Health Insurance Assistance Program (HIAP):

There have been two major developments in the HIAP. Beginning in January, people needing help with private or with COBRA insurance policies can receive \$700 instead of the current \$500 a month in assistance under the Level II insurance program. The \$700 a month is now annualized at \$8,400 total assistance for either premium OR pharmaceutical deductible assistance (not medical co-payments or deductibles). Therefore, if you have an insurance policy with a large prescription deductible requirement at the beginning of the plan year, a larger payment is now possible on your behalf.

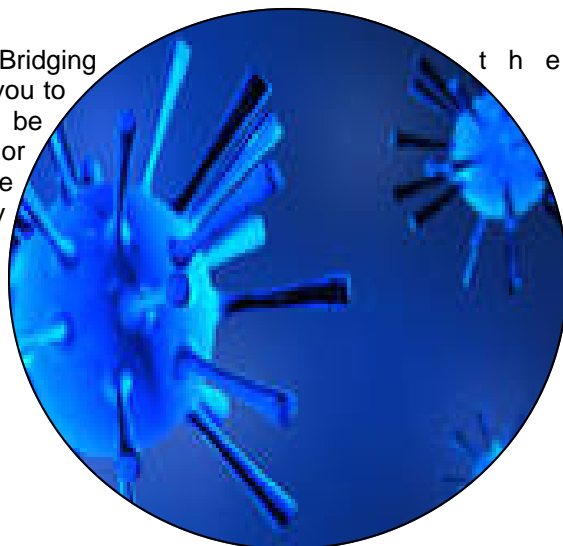
The second change is that the program no longer requires people who make between 300 and 400 percent of FPL to verify that they have over \$400 in monthly medical expenses to be eligible for HIAP assistance. Therefore, if this requirement made you ineligible before, you should speak with our staff about your current status. For questions about this change, call me (Todd) at 303-692-2783. If you live in the Denver metro area, the enrollment coordinator is Sandy Payton, at Colorado AIDS Project (303) 837-0166. Remember, you do not have to be a CAP client to enroll in the HIAP.

Finally, if you are a member of the Medicare Part D assistance program, Bridging Gap, Colorado (BTGC), you should have received a mailing that asked you to confirm what Medicare Part D or Medicare Advantage plan you would be using in 2009. This mailing also stated that we needed either an invoice or a payment coupon book for 2009 in order for the program to pay it. Some people have mistakenly sent in invoices from 2008. If you think this may be you, or if you haven't yet sent in this invoice, don't forget to keep an eye on your mail and send it in. The program won't make payments on your behalf without it. Any questions regarding BTGC should be addressed to me at 303-692-2783 or

todd.grove@state.co.us

Be well, and I hope to see you out and about.

Todd Grove
CDPHE HIV Care & Treatment Section



WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN?(CONT).



Patrick Gourley, hard at work in the newly refurbished clinic

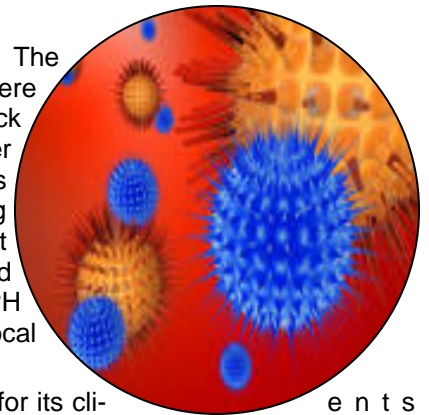
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Amenities

Although there have been many changes, what remains constant is the excellent, comprehensive medical care and adjunct services provided to clients of the ID Clinic. Care and services that include an on-site dental clinic, a pharmacy, mental health professionals, social workers, outreach staff, and a retention-in-care specialist. The ID Clinic also houses a financial advisor who facilitates clients' access to insurance or other programs for medical care and medication. Under the direction of Dr. Bill Burman, the ID Clinic is a leader in providing comprehensive medical care to HIV/AIDS clients.

History

In 1981, AIDS appeared on the horizon. The first few AIDS cases in Colorado were treated locally by Kent Penley, Patrick Gourley, and Dr. David Cohn at Denver Public Health. Soon that trickle of patients grew into an increasing torrent, requiring additional staff and resources. Important collaborative relationships were developed in the early 1980s between the staff at DPH and local activists, primarily through the local



Gay and Lesbian Community Center—a relationship that still exists today.

The ID Clinic, in its current location since 1989, provides excellent medical care for its clients and has knowledgeable physicians and experienced nurse providers who specialize in HIV/AIDS care and research.

Many things have changed in the past 25 + years but our commitment to provide the very best care for clients with HIV/AIDS is unchanged.

If you haven't seen the ID Clinic lately, stop by for a visit:

Denver Public Health, 605 Bannock, 5th Floor, 303-602-8710 or visit us on the web at www.denverhealth.org/dph In the words of a long-time clinic patient who saw the 'before' and the 'after', *"This place is absolutely wonderful. It's as beautiful as the staff who have cared for me all these years."*

Infectious Disease (ID) Clinic Location:

Denver Public Health,
605 Bannock, 5th Floor,
303.602.8710
or visit us on the web at
www.denverhealth.org/dph



HIV and STD Testing:

For testing call, 303.436.4141

If you need to access medical care for HIV, call 303.436.5129 for linkage to Care Services.

Peer Mentor Program coming to Denver

By Randy Pacheco



Receiving an HIV positive diagnosis can be one of the most terrifying and lonely situations. You feel alone and like nobody will understand. Eight years ago, when I received an HIV-positive diagnosis, I felt very frightened and stigmatized by the shame and guilt of the disease. The most I was able to do in those early days was to come into the clinic every 3-4 months to have blood work done. That was it. I didn't want to talk about it. I wanted to ignore HIV in hopes that maybe some day I would wake up to find out that it had all been just a bad dream. Unfortunately, that didn't happen and because of own internalized fear and alienation, I made some very bad decisions in regards to my health and treatment. Decisions that might have been different had there been an HIV peer mentor in my life.

An HIV peer mentor is a fellow HIV-positive person who understands the importance of managing their health by learning everything they can about the disease, the importance of adhering to HIV medication, and the importance of monitoring the disease with the aid of a qualified doctor. A mentor is a person who understands everything that a newly diagnosed, or struggling HIV person is going through because they have already experienced it. But most important, a mentor is someone who is willing and able to help the newly diagnosed find some hope and courage.

The first TOT (training of trainers) for the peer mentoring program is set for March 21-25 (yes -5 days). There is a lot of information to go over. We intend it to be an exciting and empowering adventure. Applications for participation will be available at www.dhrpc.org after January 22, 2009. We want, need, and hope for your support and participation—at whatever level. Numerous facets of the HIV community will be involved and I, for one, am looking forward to it like the first homecoming game.

Randy Pacheco
randy.pacheco@comcast.net

or Rod Rushing
rebuilt-denver@yahoo.com

For more information about the curriculum or PWA/LTI (People Living with AIDS/Leadership Training Institute) itself go to:
<http://www.cicatelli.org/LTI>



working to empower the HIV community

C.U. Clinical Trials

The following are clinical trials currently open at the University of Colorado.

For more information, visit: www.uchsc.edu/sm/caactu

ACUTE/RECENT INFECTION:

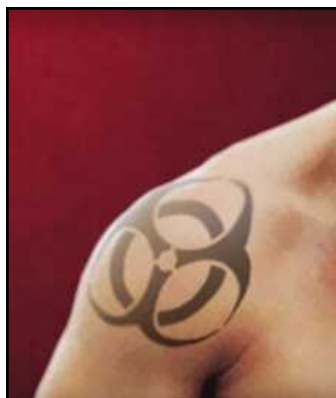
ACTG A5217 - A Randomized Study of Treatment with Tenofovir DF, Emtricitabine, and Lopinavir/Ritonavir versus no Therapy in Newly Infected HIV-1 Infected Subjects to Determine Whether Potent Antiretroviral Therapy Alters

EXPERIENCED PATIENTS:

ACTG A5241 - "The Optimized Treatment that Includes or Omits NRTIs (OPTIONS) Trial: A Randomized Strategy

OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS/COMPLICATIONS/MISC:

- ACTG A5232 [Vaccine Response/HCV/HIV] - "Optimizing Vaccine Responsiveness in HIV-1 and HCV Infections by Identifying Determinants of Responsiveness: A Pilot Study"
- ACTG A5235 [Neurocognitive Impairment] - "Phase II, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Double-Blind Study of Minocycline in the Treatment of HIV-Associated Cognitive Impairment"
- ACTG A5240 [HPV/Women] - "A Phase II Study to Evaluate the Immunogenicity and Safety of a Quadriva-



THE NET (CONT.)

(Continued from page 4)

comfortable and can really be myself. My first meeting I attended, so many of my questions about what I needed to do about my HIV were answered. Before that I was floundering, trying to answer Q's myself (online, etc.) seemingly without any support."

–Anonymous

"...this is my 3rd meeting. I feel as if the bond between the group is being established. I am grateful that this resource is being trialed/tested/established. To be learning about facts and people's individual experiences is fulfilling and empowering." **–Anonymous**

"...the NET is a place where you don't have to worry about being judged or worrying about how people see you, as we often do in the gay society. There are different kinds of people in the NET which is nice to have opinions and thoughts from different perspectives on life." **–Jarrod**

"The NET...a voice of understanding, a language of familiarity, acceptance, unconditional encouragement, strength, assistance with finding life again...permission to let go of that which holds me down, and finding freedom...community—no longer isolated, helping me to be real honest with myself." **–Lonny**

"...I am finding honest and open support in dealing with the daily challenges that come not only with being HIV + but with life in general. The friendships within the group only grow deeper each time we meet and I look forward to strengthening what I am sure will become lifelong friendships." **–Robert**

"...each time I left a meeting, I felt a wide range of emotions...all helping me on my road to accepting my new HIV status. And most important of all, I no longer felt alone." **–Scott**

"I thank God that I found the NET. It has given me more than I could ask for. It's a place I feel safe, accepted and like I'm not alone." **–Placido**

"Everyone's honesty has been incredible. The NET provides a safe environment where all the participants, in a very short time, feel very comfortable sharing their very personal stories. We are discussing issues that all of us can relate to on some level and can apply to our own situations." **–Anonymous**

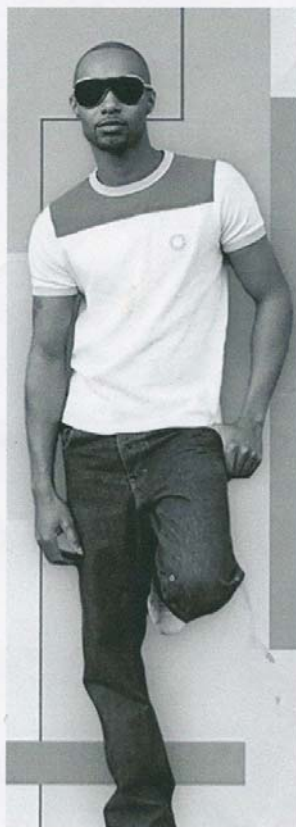
So there you have it. There really is not anything more I can say.

–Rick

If you, or someone you know, is newly diagnosed (three years or less), and is interested in attending The NET, we are currently taking requests to attend our next group, beginning some time in February or March. Also, if you know of other possible venues for The NET in the Denver area please contact Rick @ 303.995.2940. The NET is run entirely by volunteers and welcomes any assistance.

Brothas4Ever

is a peer led program of
It Takes A Village promoting the
physical, emotional, and spiritual
health of same-gender loving
African-American men
by building community.



We meet on Mondays from 7-9 p.m.
at Reggie's Place, at It Takes a Village,
1475 Lima Street, (Lima at Colfax)
in Aurora

Our meetings are confidential.

Join us for nourishing food,
discussion, and sometimes debate!

303-367-5021

Brothas4Ever@hotmail.com

*Brothas4Ever Meetings for January and
February will be announced. Call LaVelle Barrett,
the Outreach Co-ordinator @ 720.275.6910*

Poetry Sidebar

I
AM
FREE

Now I am free,
of your evil need.
You cut me deep,
and yes; you made me bleed.
You came slinking in the back door,
like some lovely stinking whore.
Filling my veins with your promise;
but then you never were very honest.
With you I flew into the sun;
and yet you still would not be done.
Everything looked oh so bright;
the times we took those fateful flights.
Light seared hard into my eyes;
I did not see the darkness rise.
The moon was the only witness to my destruction;
my heart did not beat, and my head did not function.
And still you were not done;
you insisted that you were the only one.
I called you a bitch and cursed your name;
you insisted I come and play your game.
To my veins you sent your minions:
over me you thought you had dominion.
You left me in ashes, burning in flames;
you made me sick and you made me shamed.
But like the phoenix, I do rise;
I can still see surprise burning in your eyes.
Still, I think of you often, how could I not?
Sometimes I still wonder what else you've got.
You left your scars, and I still bleed;
but to my soul, you have no deed.

Now I am free,
of your evil need.

~Robert Skinner~

2008

COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL FORUMS



The Community Educational Forums are monthly informative presentations on HIV and HIV-related topics. They are organized and conducted with the belief that "knowledge is power". The forums also afford an opportunity for poz people to socialize and network in a comfortable environment. They are usually held on the second or third Tuesday of each month in the community room at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson in Capitol Hill (enter on the side from Emerson St). The church is just a block from "Queen Soopers," and parking is available in the lot behind the church, the lot on the northwest corner of 9th & Emerson, and on the street. Bus lines 2, 6, and 12 provide service within a block or two.

A free catered dinner is served at 6pm and the presentations begin at 6:30pm, usually lasting about an hour with time for Q&A. The educational forums are coordinated each month by a small group of individuals (also living with HIV) through TEN (Treatment Education Network). We need volunteers to help with these events. If you would like to help with planning (or have suggestions); or you are able to help out at the forums (either regularly or just once in a while), please contact Michael at: forums.colorado@gmail.com

Also, if you would like to get on the list to receive a forum notification email each month, please request this by sending an email to: forums.colorado@gmail.com

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Upcoming Education Forums*:

Tuesday, January 13:

Understanding Your Immune System

THURSDAY, February 5:

Special presentation by Michael J. Van Essen on benefits and navigating the system (see bio. below)

Tuesday, March 10:

Annual Conference Update (Highlights from CROI)

Tuesday April 14:

to be announced

Tuesday, May 12:

Special Tim Gill Endowment annual community forum

at Hamburger Mary's (RSVP required)

June 9:

to be announced

July 14:

HIV & Aging

August 18:

Annual Potluck BBQ in Cheesman Park

*All forums are subject to change. Check the SIN web-site -calendar section- for updates



COMMUNITY FORUM SPEAKER

MICHAEL J. VAN ESSEN

Michael J. Van Essen is currently employed as the Benefits Establishment Specialist by Pacific Clinics (www.pacificclinics.org) a behavioral health organization headquartered in Arcadia, CA.

Pacific Clinics, with an employee population of nearly 1,200 and a consumer population greater than 10,000 currently holds 70 clinical and community centers throughout Southern California. In the position of Benefits Establishment Specialist Michael provides information and training to both staff and consumers regarding public income and healthcare benefits. These include but are not limited to: California State Disability Insurance, Social Security's Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, Medicare and Medicaid.

Michael tested positive with HIV in late 1985. After several years of exemplary health he separated from employment because of his illness and, with the help of the Northwest AIDS Foundation in Seattle, applied for and received Social Security Disability Insurance, Medicare and Medi-Cal for nearly ten years.

In 1995 he moved to Palm Springs, CA and in 1997 he was asked to join the Board of Directors of the AIDS Assistance Program, a food voucher distribution program. It was then that he began to explore the impact earned income would have on his cash benefit and healthcare coverage.

After several false starts he secured part-time employment. His personal experience lead him to provide information at free community seminars in and around Palm Springs. In 2001 Michael moved to Los Angeles and became a client of AIDS Project Los Angeles. Two years later he was hired by APLA to serve as a Social Security-trained Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach counselor. Two years later he was hired, in that same capacity, by the AIDS Service Center in Pasadena, CA. He also served on the Board of Director's of the National Working Positive Coalition and became a member and trainer for the California Health Incentives Improvement Project, the Los Angeles County 250% Working Disabled Steering Committee, the California Workgroup on Working and Disability and the Sonoma County, California Department of Health. Michael currently resides in the Silverlake neighborhood of Los Angeles, CA.

He will speak at the educational forum on Thursday Feb 5th at 6pm. The forum is at 9th and Emerson.

Hope For The Holidays

By Lisa Wheeler



The HOPE Program is a day shelter for homeless people living with AIDS. We are funded by a HOPWA grant. HOPE is an acronym for Homeless Outreach Pharmaceuticals Education. The shelter is managed by a small team of health care professionals from the Visiting Nurse Association.

My name is Lisa Wheeler and I have been the nurse/manager of the HOPE Program since 2001. It is estimated that 43 percent of persons living with HIV/AIDS end up homeless at some time during the course of their illness. When the program started in 2000 there was one client enrolled. This year we served 158 people. We understand there are many more who may benefit from our services. They sleep outside in parks, under bridges or stay with friends. Most HIV-positive people do not like the shelters. They are concerned about germs and sanitation, important issues when one is dealing with this virus, and shelters are sometimes not the most sanitary places.

Each day at HOPE we offer a hot lunch lovingly provided by Project Angel Heart. It is remarkable and heartwarming to watch our clients, often arriving thread-bare and hungry, regain their weight and their health. Colorado AIDS Project provides case management, and works to find housing for our clients. Studies show that stress dramatically harms the body, and for those living with AIDS, this can be dangerous. In the interest of providing a safe and welcoming space, the HOPE Program offers a shower, washer/dryer, cots (for clients needing a nap), lockers and small food-clothing bank. We rely on donations and the AIDS Walk for our supplies.

We also know that regular health care is imperative for optimum wellness so we help clients track appointments and support them in follow through. Statistics show that HIV-positive persons who do not see their doctor at least three times per year are twice as likely to die from AIDS-related illness. Clearly, we are invested in helping our clients keep their appointments. We averaged 97 percent success in making sure clients got to their scheduled appointments last year—a statistic we feel very proud of!

We provide health education; fill medication planners and offer health assessments and referrals. We discuss issues of homelessness, ad-

diction, mental illness, life and death. We have a beautiful garden and yard for our clients to enjoy. They may even do some gardening if so inclined. The HOPE Program offers people a chance to relax, eat well and take care of their business. It is difficult to imagine how hard it would be to take care of one's self while HIV positive and homeless. In my opinion, the best thing that happens at the HOPE Program is an extraordinary feeling of connection that is shared between participants. People are very generous with one another—eager to share a cigarette, a bit of insight for “negotiating the system”, or share from that deep heart place. For the most part, an attitude of gratitude fills the Hope Program. We love that many clients stop back to visit after they leave the program, clearly feeling at home here. We try to honor and support each person on their path, always affirming the best for them.



ARE YOU LIVING WITH HIV AND WORRIED ABOUT LOSING YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE?

CALL US ... DON'T LET IT GO!

You must be a Colorado resident,
be income eligible and be HIV
positive to qualify.

Call us if you:

- Have been fired, laid off or downsized
- Have had your hours or benefits cut
- Can't afford your premium, co-pays or deductibles
- Currently have access to COBRA through a former job
- We can also help with Medicare part D drug plan costs



**Denver Metro 303-692-2783
Outside Denver 1-877-640-0006**

**www.stdhivco.org
(see the HIV Care and Treatment Page)**

The AIDS Drug Assistance Program is also available for HIV positive individuals without access to health insurance.

Call our enrollment desk at 303-692-2716 to see if you qualify.



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

HIV RESOURCE PAGE

CLINICS AND/OR CLINIC REFERRAL:

Denver Health Medical Center
303.602.8710
fax: 303.602.8754
<http://www.denverhealth.org>

Howard Dental Center
303.863.0772
fax: 303.832.7823
<http://www.howarddental.org>

University of Colorado Hospital
720.848.0191
fax: 720.848.0192
www.uch.edu

AIDS Drug Assistance Program
303.692.2716
<http://www.atdn.org/access/states/co/co.html>

ARTS (Addiction Research and Treatment Services)
303.355.1014
<http://www.artstreatment.com>

Children's Hospital HIV Program
303.764.8233
<http://www.chipteam.org>

It Takes a Village
303.367.4747
info@ittakesavillagecolorado.org
Resource for HIV+ former inmates
Contact Cinzia Ayite

Servicios de la Raza
303.458.5851
<http://www.serviciosdelaraza.org>

Denver Infectious Disease Care
303.393.8050
www.didc.us

VETERAN'S SERVICES

The American Legion Department of Colorado
John McCartney, Department Service Officer
E-mail: aldso@coloradolegion.org

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Mental Health Corp of Denver
303.504.6649
fax: 303.757.5245
carlclark@mhcd.com

Denver Health Outpatient Behavioral Health Sciences (OBHS)
303.36.5690
<http://alcoholism.about.com/od/tx/co/qt/dhmc.htm>

Cameron Gridley Psy D.
303.557.0824

Tony Miles PhD
303.282.4483

Keith Swain, counselor
720-252-9575

REGIONAL AIDS PROJECTS:

Boulder County AIDS Project (BCAP)
303.444.6121
fax: 303.444.0260
<http://www.bcap.org>

Northern Colorado AIDS Project (NCAP)
800.464.4611
fax: 970.4848.4497
<http://www.ncaids.org>

Western Colorado AIDS Project
(800.765.8594
fax: 970.243.5791
<http://www.westcap.info>

Colorado AIDS Project (CAP)
303.837.1501
fax: 303.837.0388
<http://www.coloradoaidsproject.org>

Southern Colorado AIDS Project
800.241.5468
fax: 719.578.8690
<http://www.s-cap.org>

The intention of the Resource section is to provide a concise practical HIV guide for the community to reference. If you have a resource, or have accessed an HIV resource that has been beneficial, please submit it to the SIN website, message section, so that it may be added.



SIN COLORADO

LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

February	March	April
Community Education Forum 2/5/09 6:00 pm (topic on p.12) Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson	Community Education Forum 3/10/09 6:00 pm (topic on p.13) Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson	Community Education Forum 4/14/09 6:00 pm (topic on p.13) Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 9th & Emerson
POZ Network 3/17/09 See online calendar for details	POZ Network 3/17/09 See online calendar for details	POZ Network 4/21/09 See online calendar for details
HEP-C / HIV Co-infection Support Group 2/24/09 1660 South Albion, 3rd Floor 5:30–7:00 pm	HEP-C / HIV Co-infection Support Group 3/24/09 1660 South Albion, 3rd Floor 5:30–7:00 pm	HEP-C / HIV Co-infection Support Group 4/28/09 1660 South Albion, 3rd Floor 5:30–7:00 pm
R e c u r r i n g E v e n t s :		
HIV Support Group 2/11/09 Rose Medical Center 4545 E. 9th Ave.	HIV Support Group 3/11/09 Rose Medical Center 4545 E. 9th Ave.	The NET—HIV Support Group 4/8/09 Rose Medical Center 4545 E. 9th Ave.
The NET 2/4/09 and 2/18/09	The NET 3/4/09 and 3/18/09	The NET 4/1/09 and 4/15/09
SIN Happy Hour Thursday 2/19/09 6-8 pm Location TBD	SIN Happy Hour Thursday 3/19/09 6-8 pm Location TBD	SIN Happy Hour Thursday 4/16/09 6-8 pm Location TBD
S u n d a y C o f f e e T a l k / B r u n c h		
2/1/09 11 am – 1 pm Panera (13th and Grant St.)	3/1/09 11 am – 1 pm Panera (13th and Grant St.)	4/5/09 11 am – 1 pm Panera (13th and Grant St.)
2/15/09 11 am – 1 pm Hamburger Mary's (17th & Washington St.)	3/15/09 11 am – 1 pm Hamburger Mary's (17th & Washington St.)	4/19/09 11 am – 1 pm Hamburger Mary's (17th & Washington St.)
(See online calendar) 11 am – 1 pm Aurora Brunch @ Apple Creek 10600 E. Iliff Ave.	(See online calendar) 11 am – 1 pm Aurora Brunch @ Apple Creek 10600 E. Iliff Ave.	(See online calendar) 11 am – 1 pm Aurora Brunch @ Apple Creek 10600 E. Iliff Ave.
Free SIN Yoga Tues. 4:30 pm (2670 S Gilpin) Wed. 5:15 pm (770 S Broadway) Sat. noon (770 S Broadway) Questions? Call Phil @ 303-358-3563	Free SIN Yoga Tues. 4:30 pm (2670 S Gilpin) Wed. 5:15 pm (770 S Broadway) Sat. noon (770 S Broadway) Questions? Call Phil @ 303-358-3563	Free SIN Yoga Tues. 4:30 pm (2670 S Gilpin) Wed. 5:15 pm (770 S Broadway) Sat. noon (770 S Broadway) Questions? Call Phil @ 303-358-3563

All events are subject to change. Check the online calendar to confirm times, dates and locations

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SINColorado/cal///group/SINColorado/?v=2&t=1214812800>