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What's New at Project Inform?

New Staff Joins Project Inform

Paul Dalton has joined us as the **Outreach and Education Associate**. Paul brings strong local community connections and a wealth of experience in health education and advocacy. Paul has worked primarily in the East Bay. He has volunteered and worked in a wide range of programs/positions geared toward supporting the health of East Bay community members, including the East Bay needle exchange, Berkeley Free Clinic and AIDS Project of the East Bay (APEB). At APEB, Paul worked as an HIV treatment advocate and case manager over 50 clients living with HIV. Paul has worked with multi-diagnosed, actively using, methadone-maintained and recovering people living with HIV. He has most recently worked as part of a research study team investigating the effect of intensive transitional case management support on the health of people living with HIV transitioning back into the community after incarceration. Paul's first day in the office was Tuesday, September 4.

Charles Davis, a dedicated Project Inform volunteer since 1999, has joined us as the new **Constituent Services Associate**. Charles worked as a mail/freight clerk at Levi Strauss for nine years, and has worked as an administrative volunteer and as an intern in the nonprofit sector. Charles recently completed an intensive, five-month computer training class at Jewish Vocational Services. He joined the staff on Monday, August 27.

Gordon Menzies has accepted the position of **Development Director**. Gordon has spent his entire career working in nonprofit fund development, and has been a Director of Development for the

last seven years. Gordon has served as Development Director of the Earth Island Institute in San Francisco, the Northern California Community Loan Fund in San Francisco, and Senior Access in San Anselmo. Prior to that, he was an Assistant Director of Development at the University of California, Berkeley. Gordon joined the staff at Project Inform on Tuesday, September 4.

Shalini Eddens joined Project Inform as the **Program Manager of Project WISE** on September 17. Shalini has an extensive background in health education and working with community based organizations. Shalini is a native of Oakland, CA and recently completed her Master in Public Health at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. At Emory University, she was a Research Assistant with the Southeast AIDS Training and Education Center (SEATEC) where she was involved in several applied research projects concerning PLWHAs and HIV/AIDS service providers in the state of Georgia. Prior to living in Atlanta, Shalini was the Program Coordinator for SisterCare, a community-based early intervention program for women living with HIV in Oakland, CA.

Once again, Project Inform is incredibly fortunate. Each of these individuals brings a breadth of skill, a lot of enthusiasm, and a deep personal commitment to bringing an end to AIDS. There is much more to tell about all of them—all the more the reason to welcome them when you see them in person.

What's New in Treatment Information?

Conferences Cancelled

Given the recent events in New York and Washington DC, several conferences which were scheduled to take place in September and October have been postponed and are in the process of being rescheduled. These include the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy (ICAC) and the Salvage Therapy Workshop. The ICAAC conference often yields new information on anti-HIV therapies and therapies to treat AIDS-related conditions and opportunistic infections. The Salvage Therapy Workshop focuses on new strategies for treatment among people who have experienced viral breakthrough or poor responses while on anti-HIV therapy and/or have developed multidrug resistance to many anti-HIV therapies. It is as yet unclear if the International Workshop focusing on lipodystrophy, scheduled to take place in October in Athens, will be delayed. Because information from these conferences were scheduled to be highlighted in Project Inform's journal, the *PI Perspective*, we will be delaying publication of the journal until January of 2002.

Update from the 5th International Workshop on HIV Drug Resistance and Treatment Strategies

Barcelona Switch Study

Early results from a Barcelona study show that people who switch treatment regimens every three months may have a better anti-HIV response compared to those who continue on the same regimen. About 160 people who had not previously taken anti-HIV therapy participated in this study.

Volunteers received A] d4T+ddI+efavirenz (Sustiva), B] AZT+3TC+nelfinavir (Viracept) or C] alternated between the two regimens every three months. Those on regimen A who experienced a rebound in viral load (HIV RNA levels) would then receive regimen B, and vice versa. Participants on regimen C could switch to a new regimen based on resistance test results.

Results after 48 weeks show that about 70% of people using regimen C had viral loads below 400 copies/mL compared to about 60% for those on regimen A or B. There was no difference in increased number of CD4+ cells among the three groups—an average of about 70 cells after 48 weeks. All participants who were over 95% adherent to their medications responded equally well, regardless of the regimen.

One interesting observation was that those on regimen C reported less severe and more manageable side effects the second time they used the alternate regimen. For example, the neurological side effects of efavirenz were less severe the second time around. The researchers believe this is due to the participants knowing what to expect and working out ways to deal with the side effects from the first time they were on the regimen.

US Military Efavirenz Study

Results from a US military study suggest that African Americans may not respond to efavirenz as well as Caucasians. The study enrolled 56 African Americans and 43 Caucasians and included as a comparator another 274 people who were taking either indinavir or nelfinavir for the first time.

The study looked at the time to failure, which for this study was defined as either an increase in viral load to over 1,000 copies/mL HIV RNA for people who were able to achieve undetectable viral loads or failure to go below 1,000 copies/mL by week 16. The median time to failure among African Americans was 440 days. However, at the time of the analysis, the median time to failure among Caucasians still had not been reached after 1,400 days. In comparison, there was no difference in time to failure between African Americans and Caucasians taking either indinavir or nelfinavir.

The study's researchers initially thought that the reason for this discrepancy was because African Americans broke down

(*metabolized*) efavirenz more rapidly and, as a result, there would be lower levels of the drug in blood. However, early results suggest that efavirenz levels were comparable between the two groups. The researchers are looking into other reasons to explain these findings.

Dupont Pharmaceuticals, the developers of efavirenz, have re-analyzed the results from the Dupont 006 study, a study with 450 participants. In that study they found no difference in response between African Americans and Caucasians. Additionally, several researchers/clinicians at the workshop said that they have not seen a difference in response based on race in their practice.

What's New in Public Policy?

Action Alert: Ask Congress For Strong Leadership on AIDS Funding

The terrorist attacks on September 11 have affected all of us greatly and we are all experiencing a range of emotions. To all of those who may have lost someone as a result of this tragedy, we offer sincere condolences. We all know that it has not been "business as usual" since that date.

Typically in September, and sometimes October, we are in the middle of the appropriations battle, working hard to ensure that Congress approves the highest possible funding for HIV/AIDS programs. That work is much more difficult right now. Clearly, the political climate has changed dramatically in Washington, with strong bipartisan attention very appropriately focused on the response to the attacks.

However, we all know that the needs of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS have not changed. Congress will still vote on a funding bill that will have a strong impact on care, treatment, research, housing, and prevention. We, as AIDS advocates, must find a way to encourage our elected representatives to remember those needs when proposing funding for the upcoming Fiscal Year.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks, Project Inform, along with many other advocates, put on hold our efforts to organize individuals to contact their representatives on HIV/AIDS issues until we thought they would be both effective and appropriate. After receiving feedback from some Congressional staff, we feel that it is important and appropriate to move ahead.

We encourage you to be a part of this action by taking a few minutes to call your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators and urge them to support the highest possible funding for HIV/AIDS programs. Because final decisions will be made soon, phone calls are recommended over letters. You might also find it to be a good time to thank them for coming together in such a strong bipartisan manner to deal with the very difficult business of responding to the attacks and to support those who lost so much on September 11.

You may want to combine all of these messages in your phone call, or you might want to just talk about HIV/AIDS funding. We are including some suggested language to help you craft your message. However, the most important thing is to let your representatives know that we need their leadership to address the HIV/AIDS crisis, and how their actions affect you. The most appropriate message you can deliver is that people living with HIV/AIDS still need Congress' help and leadership.

Sample phone message:

"I am calling to thank Representative/Senator _____ for his/her leadership and hard work responding to the terrorist attacks on September 11. We are all deeply saddened by the loss so many have suffered.

I am also calling as a person greatly affected by HIV/AIDS. I hope that Representative/Senator _____ will also do everything in his/her own power to ensure the highest possible increases for all domestic and international HIV/AIDS programs. We need the continued support and leadership of Congress to help fight this epidemic."

Contact information:

You can reach your U.S. Representative and Senators through the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

What's New in Fund Raising?

Save the Date: Los Angeles Evening of Hope Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2001; Beverly Hills Hotel

Project Inform will honor a select few of the activists, volunteers and philanthropists who have contributed to the work of Project Inform since its founding in 1985. Confirmed honorees include: Barry Krost, well known in the entertainment industry as a leading manager and producer; Bruce Vilanch, a six-time Emmy award winner and well-known comedy writer who has demonstrated a deep personal commitment to the fight against AIDS and homophobia; and Brenda Freiberg, who has drawn on her personal experience and loss as well as her professional background in healthcare, public policy and communications to combat HIV/AIDS for over 15 years, and has been contributing to the work of Project Inform as a member of the Board of Directors and National Board of Governors since 1993.

Project Inform is pleased to recognize Macy*s West with this year's Corporate Leadership Award. Macy*s West has been a visionary leader in its support of community organizations engaged in the fight against AIDS. Since 1988, Macy*s Passport events alone have distributed over \$13 million to community-based AIDS organizations.

Formal invitations will arrive a month prior to the event. For more information: www.projectinform.org or call 415-558-8669 x223.



Hope and help for people facing AIDS.

Help make a difference.

Volunteer for the Project Inform Hotline.

Our next Hotline Training is October 10, 13 & 14, 2001

Project Inform seeks volunteers who are women, men, transgender, youth, people of color, bi-lingual English/Spanish, gay, lesbian, straight, and questioning.

Contact Mark Owens
415-558-8669 x218
volunteer@projectinform.org

Information, Inspiration and Advocacy for People Living With HIV/AIDS

Thank You!

Project Inform Calendar

Transplantation In People with HIV

San Francisco, CA
October 13; 1:30 - 3:45
Panel Discussion - Space is limited
Call 800-622-9010 or
www.transplantrecipients.org

Update Town Meeting

Battleship Cove - Fall River, MA
October 17; 12:30 - 3:30
Speaker Martin Delaney; RSVP required
508-324-3548

CSTEP Training; Level B

San Diego, CA
October 17-19
Free HIV treatment and care training
for non-medical service providers.
Call Claire Wingfield, API Wellness
Center, 415-292-3420 x312

15th Annual Conference on HIV/AIDS

Atlanta, GA
October 30-31 8:15am-9:15am
Martin Delaney, keynote speaker: "Is
HIV Here to Stay? HIV Care and
Treatment Update" To register: Georgia
Cooperative Health Education
Program (CHEP), www.gachep.com/define.htm or www.gachep.com/multi.htm

CSTEP Training; Level B

San Jose, CA
November 5-7
Free HIV treatment and care training
for non-medical service providers.
Call Claire Wingfield, API Wellness
Center, 415-292-3420 x312

Evening of Hope

Los Angeles, CA
November 14 6:30 - 9:30pm
Annual Fundraising Dinner
Contact Julie Doherty; 415-558-8669
x2223 or jdoherty@projectinform.org

North American AIDS Treatment Action Forum

Vancouver, BC
December 2-5 9am-5pm
PI Staff www.nmac.org

CSTEP Training; Level B

San Jose, CA
December 10-11
Free HIV treatment and care training
for non-medical service providers.
En Español.
Call Claire Wingfield, API Wellness
Center, 415-292-3420 x312

SUPPORT PROJECT INFORM BY BECOMING A PLEDGE PARTNER

As a Project Inform Pledge Partner, you can spread your tax-deductible gift into monthly payments. Pledge Partners and Partners in Hope receive "What's New?," our monthly treatment newsletter.

ADDRESS INFORMATION

Yes, I want to help Project Inform remain at the forefront of providing critically important HIV/AIDS treatment information!

Mr. / Ms. / Mrs.

Mr. / Ms. / Mrs.

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

Phone

Fax

This is a new address. My (Our) old address was: Address

DONOR FORM

Enclosed is my . . .

- Pledge Partner pledge of:** \$_____ per month for _____ months
(\$40 or more per month for a year entitles you to Partners In Hope membership)
- Donation of:** \$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$_____

I would like to join Partners in Hope with a donation of:

\$500 \$1,000 \$2,500 Other \$_____

In Honor of / In Memory of: (circle one) _____

Please omit my name from any public listing of donors to Project Inform.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Circle One: CHECK



Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Print Name as Shown on Card _____

Signature _____

Phone Number _____

WNEW

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