

# HIV/AIDS Prevention Research in Black/African American Communities



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## **HIV/AIDS Prevention Research in Black/African American Communities**

This booklet is produced by UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies and UCSF Prevention Research Center. You might use it to:

- Stay up-to-date on our latest research
- Provide materials in trainings and presentations
- Advocate for services and funding
- Write grants
- Develop new or modify existing HIV prevention programs
- Connect with us. The Investigators are listed for each study

UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS)

UCSF Prevention Research Center (PRC)

Contact us - <https://prevention.ucsf.edu/contact>

### **Acronyms**

**MSM:** We use the acronym MSM to include all gay, same gender loving, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. This group is inclusive of men who identify as Black Sexual Minority Men (BSMM).

**MSMW:** We use the acronym MSMW to refer to all men who have sex with other men and women. They may identify as gay, straight, bisexual, same gender loving, or prefer to use another term, or none at all.

**PI:** Principal Investigator. Lead researcher on the study.

**MPI:** Multiple Principal Investigator.

# MSM

## Texas PrEP Implementation Study

**Investigators:** Susan Kegeles, Greg Rebchook, Robert Williams, Scott Tebbetts, Andres Maiorana

Texas has high rates of HIV infection despite the availability of PrEP. Young Black and Latino men who have sex with men (YBLMSM) are less likely than young white MSM to take PrEP, adhere to PrEP, and continue PrEP use over time. This study involves collaboration with two CBOs providing PrEP and an organization running two PrEP clinics. The three organizations are using Core Elements of the Mpowerment Project (MP), an evidence-based, community-level intervention to facilitate the empowerment of young MSM and reduce HIV risk. This project is assessing the feasibility of using Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to develop PrEP enhanced MP activities and assessing the implementation outcomes.



Preliminary research findings:

- The study may have served as a catalyst for organizations to provide enhanced PrEP promotion activities
- MP methods can be used to support PrEP uptake, adherence, and persistence among YBLMSM (more work needed to reach monolingual Spanish-speaking men)
- The community partners have stressed the importance of being extra patient and gentle with them and clients during COVID pandemic
- PDSAs seemed to be a feasible implementation strategy
- While very challenging, because of the COVID pandemic, the last 2+ years have also been a time of considerable institutional innovation, flexibility, and dynamic growth
- Other challenges have included staff turnover, the merger of one of the organizations with a larger one that caused changes in organizational culture, integrating project activities with other services, including clinical ones, and incorporating PrEP adherence and persistence activities
- This project created an opportunity for three organizations to learn from and support each other during periodic meetings to discuss activities and exchange ideas
- Administrative challenges related to billing/invoicing sometimes stymied implementation

Hosting podcast on queer sex (MPACT DFW) - <https://anchor.fm/antonio-mercado89>

<http://mpowerment.org/mp-4-black-latino-msm/>

# MSM

## Continued

### **We Are Family: Testing, Linkage and Engagement in Care among African American Gay, Bisexual, and Trans youth in the House Ball Community**

**Investigators:** Emily Arnold (PI), Parya Saberi, Susan Kegeles, Torsten Neilands, Lance Pollack, Michael Benjamin (CAL-PEP), Felicia Bridges (CAL-PEP), and Gloria Lockett (CAL-PEP)

This 4-year study was supported by the California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP) to develop and test intervention activities that build upon forms of social support already occurring among young people involved in the house ball and gay family communities, specifically related to HIV prevention and care. This is a collaboration between UCSF, CAL-PEP, and members of the house ball and gay family communities.

**Research finding:** Many Bay Area houses and gay families already share HIV prevention information and support to help one another connect to services if necessary. Building on family connections provides a natural forum to bring up the most recent prevention and treatment advances, such as home testing and PrEP/PEP, and U=U.

<https://www.californiaaidsresearch.org/files/award-abstracts/disparities%20ucsf-cfrar-disparities-project2.html>

### **The Bruthas Project: Sexual Health Promotion Counseling Sessions**

**Investigators:** Emily Arnold (PI), Gloria Lockett (Community PI)

Black men who have sex with men and women (BMSMW) are at high risk for acquiring and transmitting HIV, but few interventions exist to address their prevention needs. To address this, we developed the Bruthas Project, a series of four individualized sexual health promotion counseling sessions designed to build upon HIV counseling and testing (HIV-CT).

**Research finding:** In this randomized controlled trial of the Bruthas intervention, we compared participants who received culturally tailored HIV testing and counseling plus four individualized counseling sessions to those who received only the culturally tailored HIV testing and counseling. BOTH groups reduced their number of sex partners and episodes of condom-less intercourse. BMSMW are responsive to HIV prevention and testing efforts when they are provided in a culturally responsive and respectful manner.

<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/bruthas-project-randomized-controlled-trial>



# MSM

## Continued



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### Using Evidence Informed Interventions to Improve Health Outcomes for People Living with HIV Initiative (E2i) Evaluation Center

**Investigators:** Janet Myers (PI), Greg Rebchook (Co-PI), Starley Shade, Kim Koester, Carol Dawson-Rose, Beth Bourdeau

The purpose of E2i was to address disparities in access to and retention in effective care and treatment for people with HIV served by Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP). E2i funded 26 RWHAP sites implementing 11 evidence-informed interventions in four focus areas, including Black men who have sex with men (BMSM). Sites differed in the services offered (clinical and non-clinical), the larger context (university hospitals, federally qualified health centers, community-based organizations), and location throughout the U.S. (rural and urban settings).

**Research finding.** Interventions in the BMSM focus area included 1) Tailored Motivational Interviewing (TMI), Project Connect, and TXXXT. BMSM interventions reached 278 BMSM. TMI and TXXXT showed a significant increase in participants' engagement in HIV care. TMI also demonstrated significant increases in ART prescription, retention in care, and viral suppression. Participation in TMI also had a dosage effect, with increased exposure to the intervention predicting greater increases in retention, and was found to be cost effective relative to viral suppression.

<https://targethiv.org/e2i/black-msm>

## BLACK MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

# MSM

## Continued

### **The LetSync Project: Creating a mHealth Tool for Enhancing HIV Care Engagement in the Dyadic Context**

**Investigator:** Judy You Rong Tan

The primary relationship provides an important context for understanding HIV care engagement, but little is known regarding how the primary relationship helps Black or African American MSM engage in care and treatment. Mobile health (mHealth) holds potential for facilitating relationship factors conducive to HIV care engagement among Black men who are in a primary romantic relationship with another man. The goal of the LetSync Project is to develop a couples-focused mHealth tool that facilitates synchronization (“let’s sync”) of HIV care engagement among Black or African American men in couples.

<https://letsync.ucsf.edu/>



### **Partner Violence, And COVID-19 On HIV Care Engagement Among Young Black Sexual Minority Men With HIV In The US South**

**Investigators:** Erik Storholm (SDSU), Susan Kegeles (UCSF), Wilson Vincent (TU).

Among sexual minority men, young Black sexual minority men are the most disproportionately impacted by new HIV infections. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most understudied factors that may exacerbate these disparities. Both IPV and substance use leading to IPV may help explain poorer CC engagement among YBSMM+ and are likely to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having devastating health and economic impacts. This study uses structural equation modeling to explore the associations between substance use and IPV and their impact on HIV care engagement, viral suppression, condomless anal sex, and to determine if distinct forms of resilience (global resiliency, coping skills, and social support) buffer associations between these relationships among YBSMM+ in the U.S. South. This study will shed new light on the associations between substance use, IPV and CC outcomes and risk and subsequently aid in developing a resiliency and advocacy-based intervention that potentially reduces the impact of substance use and IPV on CC engagement and retention among YBSMM+.

<https://chipts.ucla.edu/research/investigating-the-impact-of-substance-use-intimate-partner-violence-and-covid-19-on-hiv-care-engagement-among-young-black-sexual-minority-men-with-hiv-in-the-us-south/>

# Transgender Women

**Prevention Research Center  
Core Research Project: A  
collaboration between Cal-PEP  
and UCSF to evaluate the  
implementation of Healthy Divas,  
an intervention for Transgender  
Women**

## It Takes Two

**Investigators:** Kristi Gamarel (MPI/University of Michigan); Jae Sevelius (MPI); Don Operario (MPI/Brown University); Lynae Darbes (University of Michigan); Tor Neilands; Mallory Johnson

Transgender women, particularly Black transgender women, are among the populations at the highest risk for HIV in the United States and worldwide. One of the most consistently reported contexts for HIV transmission among trans women is within a primary partnership. Despite the critical importance of primary partnerships for HIV prevention, the vast majority of HIV prevention studies and interventions for trans women have been individually-focused. The overarching goal of “It Takes Two” is to test the efficacy of a promising couples-focused HIV prevention intervention to reduce HIV risk among transgender women and their primary partners by integrating biomedical and behavioral risk reduction strategies to help couples choose the most appropriate HIV prevention plan for their relationship.

<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth/research/>



**Investigators:** Jae Sevelius, Greg Rebchook, Beth Bourdeau, Breonna McCree, Matthew Beld, Lisa Ryan (Cal-PEP), Michael Benjamin (Cal-PEP)

Cal-PEP and the UCSF Prevention Research Center are collaborating to study the implementation and facilitate the dissemination of Healthy Divas, an intervention for transgender women developed at the UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies. Cal-PEP and UCSF investigators are working together to determine facilitators and barriers to implementation, as well to develop an implementation toolkit to support organizations in the adoption and successful implementation of Healthy Divas.

Healthy Diva’s Learning Center - <https://healthydivas.ucsf.edu/>

<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth/research/healthy-divas>

# Youth

## Connecting Resources for Rural and Urban Sexual Health CRRUSH-Sacramento

**Investigators:** Kimberly Koester, Janet Myers, Orlando Harris, Shana Hughes

In partnership with the Sacramento Zero Together Coalition, we are conducting research to increase PrEP uptake and decrease rates of sexually transmitted infections among men who have sex with men (MSM), particularly among racial and ethnic minority populations, in Sacramento County. New HIV diagnoses are highest among Latino and African American MSM between the ages of 13-44. PrEP coverage in Sacramento is substantially lower than coverage in nearby Alameda and San Francisco counties.

We plan to conduct a discreet choice experiment (DCE) to help us to identify which PrEP implementation strategies are most preferred by MSM. A DCE is designed to examine how people prioritize and make trade-offs among attributes or



characteristics of a service or product. In this case, we will use the DCE method to understand what MSM want in a sexual health services program. The DCE will provide us with rigorously generated evidence or justification for selecting the implementation strategies we plan to ultimately test in a pilot study.

<https://crrushstudy.ucsf.edu/>



## BEEM (Black Economic Equity Movement)

**Investigators:** Sheri A Lippman (MPI/UCSF); Marguerita Lightfoot (MPI/OHSU); Margaret Libby (MPI/MyPath); Emily Arnold (UCSF); Starley Shade (UCSF); Will Dow (UCB)

Black youth and young adults in the U.S. experience higher levels of poverty, illness, and discrimination than their white peers, with deep systemic social and structural inequities upending their safe and healthy transition to adulthood. The resulting health inequities are many: Black young adults experience high mental health service needs, but much less service utilization than their white peers, have higher rates of STI and less access to family planning.

The goal of BEEM is to disrupt the social determinants of poverty and structural racism in order to have a transformative impact on a healthy transition into adulthood. The intervention will provide Black youth (ages 18-24) with a Guaranteed Income and provide access to financial coaching, peer-support, and referral services and to determine the impact of Guaranteed Income and financial services on financial well-being, mental health, and utilization of mental health and sexual and reproductive health services.

For more information see our website:

<https://beemproject.org/>

50+

## Developing a group singing intervention for promoting psychosocial wellbeing among older people living with HIV

**Investigators:** Judy You Rong Tan

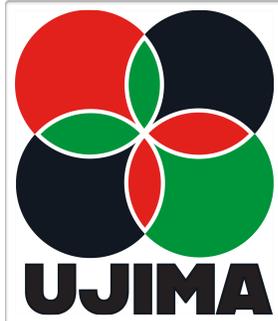
Loneliness and social isolation are common among older adults, including those who are living with HIV. Preliminary research and emergent evidence show that older PLWH desire social connections with other older PLWH that do not require disclosure of HIV-status and that help them regain a sense of control and purpose in living a fulfilling life with HIV.

This community choir intervention, with input from a community advisory council (CAC) of key stakeholders, aims to improve psychosocial wellbeing among older PLWH by enhancing group pride and personal control. This research partnership will adapt the COV intervention, modifying and refining COV's intervention protocols and procedures, ensuring integration of CAC's feedback into a final version of the UV manual and training procedures, which will be piloted to evaluate the acceptability and feasibility of implementation and assessment procedures and protocols, including randomization procedures. A final full-scale trial will provide foundational information on the first community choir intervention for addressing unmet social and psychological needs among a growing and underserved population and will inform future research.

<https://unitedvoices.ucsf.edu/>



## Additional Resources



**The Ujima Mentoring Program** provides research mentoring and funding to early-stage investigators, particularly those at HBCUs who address HIV prevention, care, and treatment in Black/African American communities. <http://tiny.ucsf.edu/L9Ley8>

CAPS Welcomes Inaugural Ujima Scholars - Whitney Irie, Ph.D., Mandy J Hill Dr. PH, and Sharon Parker Ph.D. <http://tiny.ucsf.edu/cBgnOB>

## Resources and Guidance Related to HIV and COVID-19

<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/COVID19>

## UCSF Anti-Racism Initiative

<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/antiracism-initiative>

**VIDEO. CAPS/PRC Town Hall Getting Critical: Centering Racism in HIV and Other Health Equity Research.** What it means to center structural racism in research. Lisa Bowleg, PhD, Professor of Applied Social Psychology in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at The George Washington University.



**GETTING CRITICAL: CENTERING RACISM IN HIV AND OTHER HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH**

Lisa Bowleg PhD MA

UCSF Prevention Science  
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## Fact Sheets

- Black gay men and the church (2013)  
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/black-gay-men-and-church-0>
- What are Black men's HIV prevention needs? (2020)  
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/black-men-2>
- What are Black women's HIV prevention needs? (2009)  
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/black-women>
- Fact sheets in English and Spanish  
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/resources/factsheets-english-and-spanish>

## Intervention Curricula

- The Mpowerment Project and Black/African-American gay and bisexual men  
<http://mpowerment.org/mp-4-black-latino-msm/>
- Project Style - Services developed to engage and retain men of color living with HIV in high-quality care. <https://style.ucsf.edu>
- Healthy Oakland Teen Curriculum  
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/healthy-oakland-teens-0>
- African American Men's Health Study Training Manual  
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/resources/intervention-curricula>

## Evaluation Manuals

Working Together - [A Guide to Collaborative Research in HIV Prevention](#)

**Transgender Resources** - The HIV Testing Toolkit, Transgender Health Factsheets and Recommendations for Inclusive Data Collection of Transgender People in HIV Prevention. <https://prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth/resources>





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