WAD 2016: CFAR Around the Triangle

Dr. Myron Cohen addresses HIV Prevention at the Red Tie Affair on WAD

World AIDS Day, founded in 1988, is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, increase awareness, combat stigma, and improve education. Each year, the UNC Center for AIDS Research and the UNC Institute for Global Health and Infectious Diseases host a World AIDS Day Symposium featuring presentations by UNC faculty members, expert research and medical professionals, and panel discussions.

This year, morning session keynote speaker Michael Mugavero, MD, MHSc, from the University of Alabama spoke on "Ending AIDS in Alabama". The afternoon session keynote speaker Elizabeth Connick, MD, University of Arizona, spoke on “The Role of the B Cell Follicular Sanctuary in HIV Immunopathogenesis”.

Attendees enjoyed a lively panel discussion on Access to HIV Care and presentations on a wide variety of relevant topics to the field, including “HIV Epidemiology” from Erica Samoff, PhD, MPH, North Carolina Division of Public Health and “The Role of the Immune Response in Curing HIV” from Nilu Goonetilleke, PhD, UNC Chapel Hill. Allison Matthews, PhD, UNC Chapel Hill, spoke on "Crowdsourcing Contests and Community Engagement for HIV Cure Research: A Mixed Methods Evaluation" and Sarah Joseph, PhD, UNC Chapel Hill, shared information on "HIV in the Brain: Observations from Throughout Infection”.

The UNC CFAR was represented at a number of other WAD events around the triangle this year, including the Red Tie Affair at UNC and the Durham County WAD Commemoration. Cont. on page 3
CFAR NEWSLETTER | Issue 1

CFAR Social and Behavioral Science Research Core Networking Event

On December 5, the UNC CFAR Social and Behavioral Sciences Core, in conjunction with the CODE office, hosted their fall networking event, focused specifically on the science of community engagement.

A wide range of CFAR investigators, community stakeholders, and clinicians attended the event, hosted each semester to provide a forum for multidisciplinary researchers to meet and network with each other. Breana Castonguay, Core Manager, organized and planned the event.

Attendees learned key strategies of effective dissemination used in various public health projects via guided table discussions. This was followed by unstructured networking time, during which people were able to discuss topics of interest and connect to new individuals on a personal and professional level.

Danielle Haley, presenter at the event, shared that the event was a “fantastic opportunity to meet and exchange best practices for collaborating with community members to disseminate study findings.”

Haley looks forward to “transferring these ideas to my own work and to forging new partnerships initiated by the Event.”

The core launched their first app to provide information about upcoming events and gather helpful data from those interested in the core’s efforts. This marks an exciting new venture into social media outreach for the SBSRN core.

Participants were delighted to have both structured and free time to mingle and share ideas with people working in the field of HIV/AIDS research and community engagement.

Bruce Curran, Adjunct Professor of Journalism at UNC, reflected that the “discussion reinforced my long-held belief that our messages are most effective when we talk not just about the facts of what we do but include the passion of why we do it”.

TOPICS COVERED AT THE EVENT INCLUDED:

- Global Dissemination – Wendee Wechsberg, RTI International
- Social Media and Journalism – Seth Noar, UNC School of Journalism & Laura Oleniacz, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center
- Art and Theater – Kate MacQueen, UNC CFAR & FHI 360, and Emily Namey, FHI 360
- Virtual Dissemination – Kemi Amola and Danielle Haley, HPTN 064 The Women’s HIV Seroincidence Study (ISIS)
- Photovoice Forum and Fashion Show – Alex Lightfoot, UNC School of Public Health & the Center for Health Promotion and Diseases Prevention (CDC), and Allison Matthews, UNC Institute for Global Health and Infectious Diseases and UNC Department of Social Medicine
Hightown-Weidman forms iTech
Lisa Hightown-Weidman, MD, MPH, was awarded $18 million to develop mobile technology to prevent and treat HIV in adolescents. Based at UNC, iTech will include seven collaborative research sites around the US and interventions will target 15-24 year olds at risk or living with HIV.

David Curran - Nurse of the Year
Congratulations to David Curran, RN, ACRN, CCRC, for being named the HIV/AIDS Certification Board’s 2016 Certified Nurse of the Year. We are grateful for his years of dedicated service and commitment to providing compassionate care to his patients.

World AIDS Day 2016
In addition to the World AIDS Day Symposium, the UNC CFAR supported a variety of community events around the triangle.

One such event was the annual Red Tie Affair, hosted by UNC organization GlobeMed, a group of students dedicated to fighting for global health equity.

The benefit gala united students and health professionals to engage in a compassionate dialogue about HIV/AIDS. The UNC CFAR was represented by Myron S. Cohen, MD and David Wohl, MD. Dr. Cohen, Associate Director of the CFAR, presented on HIV prevention efforts in 2016 and offered suggestions on how to continue propelling these efforts forward. Dr. David Wohl, Professor of Medicine in the UNC Division of Infectious Diseases, presented on HIV Therapy and the incredible strides that have been made in the search for a cure.

Proceeds for the event will support GlobeMed’s partnership with Young Love, an organization based in Botswana with a mission to implement life-saving sexual health education programs for youth in Southern Africa.

The UNC CFAR CODE office was represented by Office Director Caressa White at the Durham County World AIDS Day Commemoration. The event was held in Durham Central Park, featuring remarks from Michael Wilson and Virginia Mitchell, Chairs of the HIV/STI committee. Caressa White shared a timeline of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and attendees enjoyed artistic performances by TAKIRY Dance Group from El Centro Hispano and Voices from the Heart from Triangle Empowerment Center. Following a candle lighting ceremony in remembrance of those we have lost to the epidemic, the crowd walked to the LGBTQ Center of Durham for a group viewing of an HIV/AIDS-themed photography exhibit “I Still Remember” and reception.

The entrance picture to the World AIDS Day exhibit at the LGBTQ Center of Durham
Each year in the first week of November, as the geese are migrating south the CFAR Directors and the CFAR Administrative Core staff assemble to attend the National Centers for AIDS Research Meeting. This year the meeting was hosted by the Harvard CFAR in Cambridge, MA. Over the years the meeting has grown beyond a focus on CFAR Directors and administrators interacting with NIH staff. It now encompasses a multiday series of events including a meeting of members of the CFAR National Community Advisory Board, workshops and networking for young investigators, meetings of inter-CFAR interest groups, and a high profile scientific symposium. I thought I would take this opportunity to provide a few highlights of the recent meeting.

For me the highlight of the symposium was the presentation by Dr. Deborah Birx (a.k.a. Ambassador-at-Large). Dr. Birx oversees the PEPFAR program and she described how she and her colleagues collect increasingly granular data to drive increasing efficiency and efficacy. It was exciting to see this level of accountability to allow the limited funds to be directed in the most cost/outcome-effective way. A highlight of her talk was when she described the DREAMS public-private partnership to keep girls in middle/secondary school with an important part of this effort taking place in Malawi. FHI 360, our CFAR partner, will play a key role in this program.

As a group, we were introduced to the new Director of the NIH Office of AIDS Research (OAR) Dr. Maureen Goodenow. I have known Maureen since our pre-HIV days when she made important observations concerning how some retroviruses cause cancer. Her long career in HIV research while a Professor at the University of Florida included a special interest in infection of macrophages and in compartmentalized viral replication within the body. Of late, Dr. Goodenow took a hiatus from academic research to work with Dr. Birx in administering the PEPFAR program, giving her a unique breadth of perspectives as she takes over leadership at OAR. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the leadership provided by Dr. Jack Whitescarver over a number of years as Director of OAR as we look forward to Dr. Goodenow’s efforts to help shape the research agenda as we strive to bring the epidemic to an end.

Over the last few years one of the inter-CFAR efforts that has grown the most has been the CFAR National Community Advisory Board. The National CAB was formed by members of the subset of CFARs that had CABs, including our own thanks to the efforts of our CODE Office, and this level of visibility has helped push other CFARs to be more inclusive of their communities by forming their own CABs. I am happy to report that a member of our UNC CFAR CAB, Mr. Jimmy Gibbs, is an officer of the CFAR National CAB. A big thank you to Jimmy for the effort he has put forth to represent our CFAR in a leadership role.

The latest set of inter-CFAR interest groups either recently started or under discussion are a Faith Initiative Working Group, an Implementation Science Working Group, and a PrEP Working Group. We will be canvassing our membership to see who is interested but if one of these sounds like an important opportunity for you let us know and we will help get you involved.

As I said in the beginning, this is a yearly event. Next year it will be hosted by the Washington DC CFAR and we will undoubtedly be looking for some young investigators to include in that meeting. News Flash: we have committed the UNC CFAR to host this national meeting in 2018 so set aside the second half of the first week of November as we showcase our own CFAR to NIH and our peer institutions.
FHI 360 and UNC CFAR Collaborate for Brown Bag Lunch Event

On October 14th, senior researchers from FHI 360 and the UNC CFAR gathered for a brown bag lunch event to explore ways that the two organizations can expand their collaborations and offer support to each other in their HIV research and clinical efforts.

Kate MacQueen, Senior Scientist at FHI 360 and Core Director of the CFAR Developmental Core, shared that the idea for the event grew out of conversations with Ron Swanstrom on how "we could foster more engagement between FHI 360 scientists and UNC CFAR leadership". MacQueen commented, "At FHI 360 we have a long-standing tradition of brown bag lunches to communicate with each other about our work as well as to introduce established and potential partners to our in-house colleagues. This seemed a perfect mechanism to showcase what the UNC CFAR has to offer FHI 360 researchers engaged in HIV work or interested in pursuing such work."

Ron Swanstrom, CFAR Director, welcomed the group to start the meeting. Kate MacQueen discussed the funding opportunities and support for researchers offered by the Developmental Core. Marcia Hobbs, VIM Core Co-Director, discussed STI testing capacity. Jeff Stringer, CFAR International Core Director, shared about the CFAR’s commitment to women’s reproductive health locally and globally. Carol Golin, Social and Behavioral Science Research Core Director, discussed the social and behavioral database instrument database, a valuable tool produced by the core for researchers. Katie Mollan, Biostatistics Core Manager, and Cam Bay, Statistician, offered information about the statistical consulting services offered by the core.

MacQueen noted that they had a "great turnout for lunch" and "the people who attended were very engaged, asking a lot of questions". The feedback she received from her FHI 360 colleagues is that "they discovered a lot about the UNC CFAR resources and gained a much better appreciation for how the CFAR can support their work".

Plans are in the works to invite FHI 360 HIV researchers and program managers to UNC to describe their work and brainstorm about opportunities for scientific collaboration between the two organizations. Stay tuned!

Ron Swanstrom, CFAR Director, addresses investigators from the UNC CFAR and FHI 360.

Katie Mollan explains the statistical consulting services offered by the CFAR Biostatistics Core.
HIV Cure Research Day & 2BeatHIV

The Durham County Board of Commissioners has proclaimed December 14 as HIV Cure Research Day. Dr. Allison Mathews, founder and director of the 2BeatHIV research project at UNC, shared that “HIV Cure Research Day marks the one year anniversary of the founding of the 2BeatHIV project, which has far reaching impacts in North Carolina and across the world”. Matthews is “excited and proud to announce that Durham is the first city in the world to proclaim this day.” The purpose of HIV Cure Research Day is to promote community involvement in shaping the future of HIV cure research. Along with Dr. Mathews, Drs. David Margolis (Founder and Director of the UNC HIV Cure Center) and Stuart Rennie (UNC Department of Social Medicine) were also in attendance at the event.

To celebrate the proclamation, the 2BeatHIV project hosted a Proclamation Jam Session at Beyu Café. The event provided a review of the project’s accomplishments and summarized community feedback on the next steps to ensure equity in HIV prevention, treatment, and cure efforts for people affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Angela Vick-Lewis, a long-time advocate for HIV awareness, performed a poem and shared her story, “When I learned that I was HIV positive, I made a pact with God to share my story and raise awareness about HIV.” Additionally, Nasir Jones Harvard Hip Hop Fellow, Dasan Ahanu, performed an original theme song for the 2BeatHIV project entitled, “Spit for a Cure.”

A highlight of the evening was the premiere of the trailer for the documentary, “30,000,000:1 – Crowdsourcing a Cure for HIV,” which features interviews by Durham residents, HIV cure researchers, and highlights from 2BeatHIV’s development over the course of a year. The benefit organization for the event was Red-Alert, which was founded by Nequa Powell and Sharisse Berry, two pharmaceutical doctorate students at Hampton University, who won the 2BeatHIV Innovation Challenge in May 2016.

2BeatHIV is a research project at UNC Chapel Hill in the Department of Social Medicine and the Institute for Global Health and Infectious Disease, and is funded by the NIH NIAID. CFAR Member Dr. Allison Mathews is the founder and director of the project, which has developed partnerships with over 30 community-based organizations, businesses, and community leaders; had over 1000 attendees at its local events; and reached over 250,000 people online. Dr. Mathews has presented her research findings at several universities, regional, national, and international conferences, and was a speaker at TEDxDurham.