

The Newsletter of the STAR Program

HIV Link is now called *STAR Community Link*, to reflect the STAR Program's expansion beyond HIV care and its connection to the local and global communities it serves.

The mission of the Special Treatment and Research (STAR) Program is to provide and enhance quality healthcare locally and globally through the integration of treatment, prevention, research, and education.

Spotlight on the Adolescent Education Program/Teens Helping Each Other (THEO)

Under the direction of Christine Rucker, MA, the STAR Program's Adolescent Education Program (AEP), one of SUNY Downstate's first outreach and prevention programs, has empowered youth to achieve and maintain good health, set and achieve academic goals, and serve their communities for nearly 3 decades. Since 1989, the AEP has targeted youth ages 10-24, providing HIV, teen pregnancy and substance use prevention education through skills building and counseling to youth at risk. The AEP focuses on Central Brooklyn, which has disproportionately high rates of teen pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI). Central to AEP's success is Teens Helping Each Other (THEO) (www.theoprogram.org), which trains a cohort of adolescents to become peer educators through its Summer Training Institute. After a rigorous 76-hour training, peers participate in a wide array of initiatives. A new blog platform (www. theoadventures.wordpress.com), provides an outlet for teens in the THEO Program to express themselves.

The Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP), funded by the NYS Department of Health, Adolescent Health Unit, provides pregnancy prevention information and two evidence-based curricula for youth ages 11-18. Making Proud Choices (MPC) and Be Proud! Be Responsible (BPBR) are conducted in after-school and school-based settings. MPC is an 8-module curriculum that provides adolescents with the knowledge, confidence and skills necessary to reduce their risk of STI, HIV and pregnancy by abstaining from sex or using condoms if they choose to have sex. The intervention is based on cognitive-behavioral theories, focus groups and the authors' extensive experience

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working with youth. MPC is an adaptation and extension of the original BPBR curriculum that integrates teen pregnancy prevention along with HIV/STI prevention. In addition to these interventions, the peer leaders write, direct and perform in a monthly YouTube web series called The CHAT, which tackles youth sexual health issues from a young person's point of view. The PREP Program is coordinated by Marian Searchwell, MS. (718) 270-3992; marian.searchwell@downstate.edu. The NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute funded THEO Health Advocate Program (THAP) utilizes trained Youth Health Advocates to provide HIV/STI and hepatitis C (HCV) services to young people between the ages of 13-24. Advocates provide evidence-based and medically accurate sexual education to young people living with HIV and to youth at the highest risk for HIV, STI, and HCV, which includes court-involved youth, children of incarcerated parents, and young women formerly involved in sex trafficking. The evidence-based interventions known as Be Proud! Be Responsible! (BPBR) and Community PROMISE are utilized to deliver these services. BPBR

is a six-week session that focuses on HIV/STI and pregnancy prevention. *Community PROMISE* is a high impact prevention intervention that relies on role model stories to reduce HIV risk behaviors and increase engagement in care. The THAP Program is coordinated by Anthony Thompson, BA. (718) 270-2356; Anthony.thompson@downstate.edu.

In the Youth Advocacy Outreach

Project, peer leaders conduct workshops for peers in the community on various social topics including HIV/AIDS, violence prevention, teen sexuality and relationships, self-esteem building and youth advocacy. Street outreach is conducted to distribute literature and barrier protection methods to community adolescent residents. The AEP's Technical Assistance Project uses AEP/THEO staff and peer educators to provide technical assistance training for community organizations implementing new peer education programs. Technical assistance training consists of ten workshops: Orientation and Guidelines, AIDS 101, Basic Anatomy, Adolescent Sexuality, STIs and Birth Control, Safer Sex and Condoms, Substance Abuse, Homophobia and (continued on p. 5)

PROGRAM UPDATES

STAR Program Demonstrates Success in Training **Providers in Substance Use Screening** The STAR Program's SAMHSA funded Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Training Center teaches residents and students in the health professions the necessary skills to provide evidence-based screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment for patients who are at risk for a substance use disorder. The center also develops the leadership skills needed to champion the implementation of SBIRT throughout SUNY Downstate Medical Center's (DMC) healthcare workforce. The SBIRT Program is actively developing capacity to implement the SBIRT protocol in the following groups at SUNY-DMC: HIV Track internal medicine residents; family medicine residents; psychiatry residents; internal medicine residents in ambulatory care at Kings County Hospital Center (KCHC); and physician assistant and midwifery students at SUNY-DMC's College of Health Related Professions (CHRP).

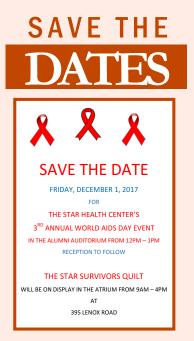
Over the past two years, STAR's SBIRT Program staff trained 228 participants in SUNY-DMC based programs, surpassing its original training goals. As of September 2017, the program trained 99 physician assistant and midwifery students; in the residency programs, the program trained 22 in family medicine, 9 in HIV Track internal medicine, 25 in internal medicine, and 39 in psychiatry. Dr. Yolene Gousse, program evaluator, found that program trainees demonstrated statistically significant improvements in knowledge of screening tools, substance use risk limits and motivational interviewing. The evaluation also showed a high degree of satisfaction of the students with the training.

The SBIRT Program has also trained over 150 community healthcare clinicians and support staff at the STAR Health Center, START Treatment and Recovery, Lantern Community Services, the Brooklyn Hospital PATH Center, Rainbow Heights Club, Medgar Evers College, Brooklyn Plaza Medical Center, and KCHC's ambulatory care physicians. In the third and final year of the grant, the focus is shifting to the sustainability of SBIRT in the post-funding environment. Training groups have selected champions from their faculty who will educate future residents, physician assistants and midwifery students. The program has completed initial training of trainers for the faculties in internal medicine and physician assistant programs. As the opioid epidemic continues to impact NYC residents, the importance of screening for sub-

stance use becomes more apparent. According to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, there were 1,374 drug overdose deaths in 2016, an increase of 437 from last year. Fentanyl is contributing to this rise in overdoses. It is a synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine. Nearly 72% of all overdose deaths included heroin or fentanyl. The health department and pharmacies are distributing Naloxone to prevent overdoses. Providers can also intervene by screening patients for substance use, using motivational interviewing to explore their use, and encouraging patients to carry Naloxone or seek treatment options. The STAR Program's SBIRT Program highlights the opioid overdose crisis in its training programs and the critical role of healthcare professionals in discussing their patients' drug use. The program looks forward to training more healthcare providers on the SUNY-DMC campus and in New York City community groups on this vital topic.



From left, Mary Crymes, Gracie Han, Dr. Hector Ojeda-Martinez, Mark Frederick, Magna Robinson at the LGBT Expo in NYC in September 2017. The LGBT Expo is the largest and longest-running LGBT convention in the world celebrating diversity in business, education, politics, the arts, health, technology, media, travel, and non-profit sectors.



December 1 - World AIDS Day Quilt Display and Program

December 8 at 5pm - BATES Network World AIDS Day Teen Town Hall

FACULTYANDSTAFF UPDATES

Lilly Appiah-Agyeman, BS joined the WIHS team as an interviewer in November 2017. She is a recent magna cum laude graduate of Allegheny College with a Bachelor of Science degree in neuroscience. As an undergraduate, Ms. Appiah-Agyeman worked on several projects including research related to Alzheimer's disease. Through this experience, she developed skills in medical research, data collection and analysis, medical writing and medical terminology.

Lamont Bryant, BS, MPS, joined the STAR Program in October 2017 as a Community Linkage Specialist for the newly funded Corrections to Community Program, which will be known as Back to Brooklyn. The new program will facilitate the transition of HIV+ individuals from incarceration to the community. Mr. Bryant has 14 years of experience working with the incarcerated population in NYS correctional facilities, providing HIV and HCV education, HIV antibody testing, counseling and transitional planning services for people living with and without HIV/HCV. Previously, he worked for The Osborne Association and LCA, Inc., providing emergency housing, counseling and referral services to PLWHA in New York City.



Mary Crymes, RN, ACRN, has been selected to receive the Joanne Ruiz Achievement Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice in HIV by the

Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC). The award was presented at the 30th Annual ANAC Conference in Dallas, Texas on November 4, 2017 at the Fairmont Dallas.

The ANAC is a national nursing organization specializing in the care of individuals infected with HIV. The Joanne Ruiz Achievement Award recognizes an "outstanding nurse clinician," according to ANAC. "A nurse who is a source of pride to self, peers, patients/clients and colleagues. He or she brings knowledge, skill and caring to people with HIV infection and their families and/or significant others. In essence, the award recognizes the nurse you would most like to care for your loved ones."

Ms. Crymes has been involved in HIV care since 1993, and has served as Charge Nurse at the STAR Health Center since November 2003. She has an extensive and diverse background in ambulatory care nursing including correctional health, substance abuse and family planning. She is certified in HIV/AIDS nursing, has been an active member of ANAC since 1998, and has served on the ANAC national board and as an officer.

"ANAC is the leading nursing organization responding to HIV/AIDS," according to its website. "Since its founding in 1987, ANAC has been meeting the needs of nurses in HIV/AIDS care, research, prevention and policy." Headquartered in Ohio, ANAC has more than 40 chapters worldwide. It comprises a group of nurses, healthcare professionals and others from around the world who are committed to HIV nursing. Affiliate members include social workers, pharmacists, physician assistants, lawyers, doctors and anyone involved in the care and support of people with HIV/AIDS.

Kate Fitzsimons, LMSW, joined the STAR Program in June 2017 for a short term case management project in the STAR Health Center. Prior to joining STAR, she was Symposium Coordinator for JCC Manhattan's first Symposium on Positive Aging, after having been the Social Work Assistant for the JCC's 60+ program. She has worked with the Brooklyn Community Pride Center LGBT community center as a volunteer co-facilitator with their Great Minds senior group. Ms. Fitzsimons has also written for Publishers Weekly Magazine. She has a Master's degree in social work from Fordham University, and is a NYS licensed social worker.

Joy Ford, PA-C, AAHIVS, joined the STAR Program in October 2017 as a STAR Health Center and WIHS clinician. Ms. Ford came to STAR from Atlanta with a wealth of experience in HIV care. She has an undergraduate degree in social work and a Master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies from Pace University. She most recently worked as a PA at the Grady Health System in the Infectious Disease Program providing adult and adolescent HIV and primary care; her broad experience includes college student health, clinical trials, urgent care, HIV pediatric care and correctional health care. Ms. Ford has also participated in multiple medical missions in Africa and Haiti.

Ronald Forehand joined the STAR Program's hepatitis C (HCV) team in October 2017. Prior to joining STAR, he was a peer educator at Montefiore Medical Center, where he provided support to patients with HCV and HIV, and provided harm reduction, PrEP/PEP and outreach services. Mr. Forehand is currently working to obtain his CASAC certification.

Mariel Hoepelman, BA joined the STAR Program in August 2017 as a Prevention Navigator on the PrEP Team. Prior to joining STAR, Ms. Hoepelman served as Program Coordinator for the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Project (PEOPLE Project) at NuHealth Family Health Centers, a federally qualified health center on Long Island. Prior to that, she conducted field work in applied behavior analysis providing discrete trial training and incidental teaching intervention for children with developmental disabilities at Queens College SIBS Club. Ms. Hoepelman has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Queens College and is fluent in Spanish.

Christopher Jimenez, LMHC, CASAC was selected to manage the STAR Program's Harm Reduction Program. Mr. Jimenez joined STAR in 2011, providing clinical services as a licensed mental health counselor and manager of the SAMHSA funded minority women grant. In the past two years, he has worked as Training Coordinator of the SAMHSA funded SBIRT grant. Laurie Sadofsky, BA will assume the coordinator role for the SBIRT Program.

Renny John joined the STAR Program in August 2017 as a Prevention Navigator. Mr. John has extensive experience in human services, having worked with both adolescents and adults, with a particular focus on underserved populations. Prior to joining STAR, he worked as a Travel Health Education Outreach Specialist for the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, conducting outreach and health education that focused on Zika, Lyme Disease, Cryptosporidium, Salmonella and PrEP and PEP usage. He also handled the incentive item inventory for the Bureau of Communicable Diseases. Mr. John is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in public health at Brooklyn College with plans of pursuing a Master's degree.



Tyler Martinson, Care Coordinator for STAR's Medical Case Management Program, was honored for professionalism at University Hospital's quarterly Employee Recognition Ceremony in September 2017.



From left, Dr. Jack DeHovitz, Natalie Mitchell, Dr. Jameela Yusuff.

Natalie Mitchell, AOS was chosen for a STAR Program Recognition Award in September 2017. Ms. Mitchell joined the STAR Health Center in 2007 as a temporary Administrative Assistant. In 2010, she became a permanent staff member. She is extremely efficient in handling patient scheduling and related clerical duties, and demonstrates exceptional customer service, providing patients with a calm voice and cheerful smile. Ms. Mitchell has an Associate's degree in Occupational Studies/Medical Assisting from ASA College.

Latesha Richards joined the STAR Program's care coordination team as a Medical Case Management (MCM) Patient Navigator in August 2017. Ms. Richards has experience working in geriatric and youth outreach programs that serve people with mental health disorders. Most recently she has worked for Visiting Nurse Service's Manhattan Mobile Crisis and Parachute Teams.



Lorraine A. Sanassi, DHSc, PA-C, Assistant Professor of SUNY Downstate's Physician Assistant (PA) Program and Coordinator of the PA HIV Track Training Program at STAR, has been named Physician Assistant Educator of the Year by the NYS Society of Physician Assistants. Dr.

Sanassi was recognized as a Presidential Honoree by the Society and as an exemplary educator, advisor, and mentor for PA students.



Marian Searchwell, MS, Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) Coordinator for STAR's Adolescent Education Program (AEP), received the "Non-Profit Leader of the Year" award from Diaspora Community Services on October 26, 2017. The AEP has worked closely with

Diaspora for over 10 years through various partnerships around youth development, pregnancy prevention, and HIV education. The evening celebrated and highlighted Diaspora's community leaders and partners.

Robert Teixeira, MPIA, MA, MSW, LCSW, joined the STAR Program in September 2017 as a temporary social worker. He has clinical and supervisory experience working with the mentally ill and chemically addicted (MICA), the homeless, LGBTQI, women with children, seniors, and the previously incarcerated. At Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), where he worked as a mental health counselor for three years, he honed his skills as a psychotherapist, offering individual, couples, and group psychotherapy. He opened his private psychotherapy practice in 2011. He is the author of The PSALM® Cards and Messages from the Psalms (Schiffer Publishing), and is in the process of completing work on a historical novel.

Liza Valdivia, MD joined the STAR Program in October 2017 as a Clinical Assistant Professor and STAR Health Center clinician. She received her MD at Tufts University School of Medicine, completed an internal medicine residency at Brown University and an infectious diseases fellowship at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Dr. Valdivia has been named Director of HCV Services.

Ramaswamy Viswanathan, MD, DrMedSc, associate professor of psychiatry and psychiatric consultant to the STAR Health Center, received the American Psychiatric Association's 2017 Ronald A. Shellow Award and the 2016 George Tarjan Award during the association's recent annual meeting in San Diego. The Shellow Award recognizes the enduring commitment and outstanding work through service to the APA; the Tarjan Award, named after the APA's first international medical graduate (IMG) president, recognizes a physician who has made significant contributions to the enhancement of integration of IMGs into American psychiatry. Dr. Viswanathan is also chair of the Psychiatric Grand Rounds Committee and director of consultation liaison psychiatry and psychosomatic medicine at SUNY Downstate.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT Neighbors Together

Neighbors Together (NT) (www.neighborstogether.org) is committed to ending hunger and poverty in Ocean Hill, Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant, three of the lowest-income areas in NYC. NT offers a community café that provides healthy, delicious food 5 days per week to anyone in need; an empowerment program that connects members to vital resources such as housing, health care and job training; and a community action program in which members organize and engage with policymakers to achieve fair and just laws for NYC. NT serves over 10,000 people annually. The STAR Program's Georgene Servio, LPN, BS, conducts hepatitis C education and testing on-site at NT.

GRANT AWARDS

Under the leadership of Jessica Yager, MD, MPH, the STAR Program was awarded \$550,000 over 5 years from the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute's Corrections to Community Care Continuum. The project, which started in August 2017, provides comprehensive care to previously incarcerated HIV+ individuals coming home to Brooklyn. This grant is the first step in the development of "Back to Brooklyn," a model of care to provide immediate access to comprehensive medical care, behavioral health care and support services to the previously incarcerated.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

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PHONE LINK

Patient Care, Community and Medical Education, and Research Programs are listed below. For more information, please call the numbers listed below or the STAR Program at:

(718) 270-2301 OR

visit our website at: www.starprogram.nyc

PATIENT CARE AND SERVICES

FOR ADULTS Out-Patient Care STAR Health Center (SHC): (718) 270-3745

Mental Health Services: (718) 270-3745

Family-Centered Care Program (FCCP) (718) 270-2357 or 3745

FOR ADOLESCENTS

Health & Education Alternatives For Teens (HEAT) Program: (718) 467-4446

FOR CHILDREN Infant and Child Learning Center (ICLC): (718) 270-2598

COMMUNITY AND MEDICAL EDUCATION

Prevention Services for Adolescent and Young Adults – SUNY Adolescent Education Program (AEP): (718) 270-3203

HIV Residency Track: (718) 270-6747

Physician Assistant HIV Track: (718) 270-4752

RESEARCH

Women's Interagency HIV Study (WIHS): (718) 270-4435

STAR Community Link STAR Program

SUNY Downstate Medical Center 450 Clarkson Avenue, MSC 1240 Brooklyn, NY 11203-2012

Director Jack A. DeHovitz, MD, MPH, MHCDS, FACP

Editorial Board Mary Crymes, RN; Sara Harvey; Ellen Honey, LMSW; Christopher Jimenez, LMHC, CASAC; David Odegaard, MPH; Adrienne Pierce, MS; Christine Rucker, MA; Kathleen Russell, MPH, JD

Design Biomedical Communications

Telephone (718) 270-2301

Fax (718) 270-3386

Web www.starprogram.nyc



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Sensitivity, Public Speaking and Presentation Skills.

The BATES (Brooklyn Association of Teen Educators) and BASNAP (Brooklyn Adolescent Service Providers Network for AIDS) networks were established to encourage service providers and peer education groups in Brooklyn to work together on community projects that serve at-risk youth. BATES sponsors an annual conference for youth to empower teens to work towards positive goals in their lives. BASNAP sponsors an annual conference for professionals working with at-risk youth borough wide. The conferences are held each year at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. The AEP also sponsors an annual observance of World AIDS Day. This year's event will be held on Friday, December 8, 2017 as a Teen Town Hall meeting. For more information, visit www. eventbrite.com/e/lets-talk-about-sex-baby-be-a-better-you-tickets-38663152530

JOB OPENINGS

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner or Psychiatrist: Duties: Provide initial diagnosis evaluation, formulate diagnosis, make recommendation for treatment approaches and implement treatment. Provide ongoing treatment to patients utilizing pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy and other proven and accepted psychiatric treatment modalities. Participate in mental health (MH) staff meetings to ensure ongoing communication, adherence to regulatory requirements, and adherence to AI MH standards. Participate in case conferences, integrating HIV primary care and MH/substance use treatment. Make referrals for psychotherapy, substance abuse treatment and buprenorphine treatment to STAR Health Center (SHC) MH and primary care team. Provide ongoing training and education to SHC staff on how to recognize psychiatric symptoms to facilitate early intervention, and handle emergent situations such as suicidal and violent behaviors in a therapeutic manner. Maintain electronic health records (EHR) and other statistical and narrative reports. Provide psychiatric care to LGBTQ populations during LGBT session. Required: NYS licensed nurse practitioner with specialization in psychiatry or NYS licensed MD, board certified in psychiatry. New graduates with excellent internship/prior MH experience considered. Knowledge of cognitive behavioral and solution focused and/or other time effective, life skills building therapeutic models. Preferred: Experience with HIV. Two years' experience. Bilingual in English/ Creole or Spanish an asset. Salary Range: \$100-110K for part-time position To apply, submit cover letter and resume to: Jameela.yusuff@downstate.edu

Operations Manager: Duties: Oversee and coordinate all day-to-day patient care activities and operations to ensure optimal patient experience. Work with staff across disciplines to ensure smooth patient flow, including room assignment, timely start and end of sessions, completion of all elements of initial/annual visits, and team meetings and interventions as needed for effective patient care. Ensure compliance with internal policies and regulatory requirements such as NYS Department of Health, Joint Commission and the National Committee for Quality Assurance. Directly supervise nursing, nutrition and clerical staff, ensuring

appropriate staffing assignments, efficiency and responsiveness to patient needs to facilitate patient enrollment and retention in care at SHC and research programs. Manage and evaluate nursing staff. Oversee the well-functioning of the SHC, including all physical plant related issues (coordination with housekeeping, maintenance, and trade shops); ensuring efficient management of the SHC front desk, supplies, and equipment. Participate in the leadership of the SHC Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program; directly responsible for the identification of QI measures, tracking and development of systems for improvement. Develop, maintain, and execute SHC-specific policies and procedures governing all aspects of service delivery, in compliance with institutional and regulatory requirements. Address/resolve consumer requests/complaints through discussion, arbitration, conflict resolution and collaboration with UHB Patient Relations. Work closely with the SHC Assistant Director, Care Management, Billing Office, and Office of Managed Care to monitor billing activity and maximize reimbursement opportunities. Work collaboratively with DMC Patient Accounts and Registration Departments. Oversee management of the SHC EHR, coordination with institutional IS, registration and billing departments, and laboratory. Work closely with investigators to ensure integration of clinical research into the SHC; oversee the integration of regulatory requirements and procedures for new and ongoing research projects. Facilitate integration of clinical training into SHC service delivery system (i.e., ID fellows, HIV track in categorical medicine and HIV specialty PA Program). Responsible for strategic planning and program development to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, including submission of progress reports to funders, participation in budget development and assistance with grant writing, as needed. Serve as primary liaison with UHB administration to ensure compliance with institutional policies and procedures. Serve as SHC representative on internal and external committees to promote quality patient care and promotion of SHC services in the community. Required: Bachelor's Degree with at least 5 years' management experience in an academic medical center with integrated

care/research. Experience with EHR and Microsoft Office applications. Cultural competence required. Effective written and verbal skills. Preferred: Master's degree. Experience with target population including MSM, LGBT, sex workers, HIV/HCV+ individuals, substance users and/or other high-risk populations. \$51,366.00-\$108,023.00 Salary: +\$3,026.00* (*Represents Location Pay for FT appointees). Hours: 9am-5pm; M-F including some evenings. To apply, submit cover letter and resume to: The Employment Office, SUNY Downstate Medical Center, 450 Clarkson Avenue, MSC 1194, Brooklyn, NY 11203 (Email: Careers@downstate.edu). Please include: Job Title (STAFF ASSOCIATE), Line (33336) and Posting ID (13137).

Peer Leadership: Duties: Introduce clients to SHC services. Assist clients to achieve full program and medication compliance. Educate new and existing clients on basic HIV/HCV transmission, disease and treatment. Identify resource materials for medication adherence. Document all services provided within 24 hours. Work closely with the team to develop a plan for providing telephone and face-to-face support to assigned clients. Maintain professional relationships with clients and ensure client confidentiality. Complete any administrative work related to the program. Tasks may be modified over time. Provide client support and assistance through monitored field work which includes general education, clients escort and other peer support. Required: Lived experience with target population, experience working with HIV+, HCV+, substance abuse use and/or high-risk populations: experience working with families (with children) and available to work evening clinics. Ability and willingness to attend required trainings. Ability and willingness to share personal experiences of living with HIV/AIDS to help educate, provide emotional support and offer practical self-care strategies to clients. Preferred: Excellent interpersonal and communication skills; able to advocate for self and others. Computer skills and familiarity with office software applications. Salary: \$12.00/hr. (M-F; 5 hours/wk). To apply, submit cover letter and resume to: magna.robinson@downstate.edu