

Community Educator Fact Sheet

Community Educators (CE)

Each HPTN clinical research site (CRS) has community education staff to facilitate community involvement. Community Educators serve as a bridge between researchers and the communities where trials are implemented. They help develop community relations and are liaisons to the CRSs Community Advisory Boards (CABs).

Community Educator Roles

HPTN CEs are responsible for the development and implementation of site-specific community involvement work plans (CIWP) that outline goals, objectives and scope of work, including community needs assessment. CEs work in collaboration with local community members to assess and identify appropriate educational strategies/materials that need to be developed to accurately educate their communities about the research agenda. For example, educators might utilize drummers to gather people together, and educational drama to illustrate how a study participant learns about trial procedures and other technical aspects of the study.

CEs are responsible for assuring that community members understand that research is not provision of care. CEs also make certain that community members have input into study issues such as determining appropriate and non-coercive incentives for trial participation, as well as the packages of services that make up the standard of care. CEs need to have a firm grasp of ethical considerations, such as making sure that informed consent of trial participants is truly understood and voluntary.

Community Education

Community education is not recruitment. Community education is a process that helps to lay the foundation for recruitment and ongoing dialogue between community members and researchers.

Community education strategies should focus on:

- Increasing awareness of trial participants, community members infected and affected by HIV, and the community at-large about HIV prevention research
- Increasing participation in research trials
- New movements and trends in HIV prevention (for example, how are studies affected by the rapidly changing landscape with regard to access to antiretrovirals in resource-poor settings)
- Scientific concerns in the design and development of clinical trials
- HPTN efforts and initiatives

Community education efforts also include strategies that increase the knowledge level of researchers and staff about historical, cultural, social and political issues. These efforts give clinical research site staff insight on community needs and facilitate ongoing

reciprocal learning and interaction between community members and researchers. Before one can embark on study-specific and target population-specific education that can support trial recruitment, it is important that the community at large is sensitized about all aspects of HIV prevention research.

Considerable variations in community education activities exist among HPTN sites. Factors that influence this may include the type of trial being conducted and/or the geographic region.

Additional Information and Contact Details

HPTN Web Link

- <http://www.hptn.org>

HPTN CORE Community Involvement Program

Family Health International

Post Office Box 13950

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 USA

(919) 544-7040

- Jonathan Paul Lucas
Community Program Manager
Extension 11458
- Rhonda White
Community Program Manager
Extension 11515
- Cheryl Cokley
Community Program Associate
Extension 11359