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6 NETWORK MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATION

The Leadership and Operations Center (LOC) supports and coordinates much of the communications within the HPTN through conference calls, in-person meetings, electronic and written materials, social media and through the HPTN's website. The website serves as a main driver of communication, where study-specific information and postings about Network-wide activities can be found. The Senior Communications Officer at the LOC is primarily responsible for creation and dissemination of HPTN material.

6.1 Annual Network Meeting

In collaboration with the HPTN leadership, the LOC organizes an annual Network meeting to bring together HPTN members and collaborators to discuss study designs and research goals, review data from ongoing trials, examine cross-cutting issues, and provide an overview of the HPTN scientific agenda. In addition, the meeting provides opportunities for training, identifying key issues, defining and discussing Network procedures, and clarifying roles and responsibilities of HPTN members. The meeting generally includes plenary sessions to update HPTN members on the latest scientific research concerning HIV prevention. The Executive Committee (EC), Scientific Committees (SCs), Working Groups (WGs), and protocol teams schedule meetings in conjunction with this yearly event. The LOC is responsible for the overall logistics of the meeting; preparation of agendas and background materials; and subsequently, dissemination of summaries for the EC, SCs, WGs, protocol teams, and protocol-specific sessions in collaboration with the chair of the respective committee, team, or group. Additionally, the annual Network meeting may provide NIH training opportunities.

6.2 Conference Calls

Conference calls are used extensively to facilitate the Network's research activities.

The LOC provides a broad range of administrative support for conference calls; preparation and/or distribution of call agendas and pre-meeting materials; sending email meeting reminder notices; and preparation, distribution, and archiving of conference call summaries. As part of their support of these groups, LOC staff document and distribute summaries of EC, SC, WG, protocol team and investigator conference calls.

In addition, webinar support is provided to allow for interactive slide presentations and other media rich methods for sharing of information and data.

6.3 Material Distribution

Staff of the HPTN central resources (LOC, Statistical and Data Management Center [SDMC] and Laboratory Center [LC]) disseminate HPTN information and study materials using a variety of techniques including newsletters, email, CD-ROM, website postings, facsimile, mail, and express mail services. To ensure information transfer, each Network organization must:

- Have the capacity to send, access, and receive materials distributed using the above techniques
- Ensure that HPTN communications and materials are distributed to all appropriate staff members
- Maintain all key study and HPTN communications in a well-organized filing system

Key HPTN information is posted on the HPTN website for access by all Network members. Information from Central Resources and from [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) is included and

maintained regularly to ensure timeliness of material availability and dissemination. Other websites with information relevant to the Network include: [Regulatory Support Center](#) (RSC), [Office of Human Research Protections](#) (OHRP), [US Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA), NIH, [Office of Clinical Site Oversight](#) (OCSO) and [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).

6.4 HPTN Website and Social Media

The [HPTN website](#) provides a wide range of materials.

The general philosophy governing the design, maintenance, and content of the website is to provide a site that (1) contains useful and up-to-date information on the Network organization and studies; and (2) accommodates various Internet connections and software and hardware limitations across this multinational Network.

6.4.1 Website Structure and Organization

Documents available on the HPTN website are in PDF unless otherwise noted. This may include posting HPTN protocols, letters of amendments, full protocol amendments. Study-specific pages are developed to suit the needs of each particular study. An updated list of site names and numbers, with contact information, and a list of protocols (numbers and titles) that includes participating sites and status of each study is also posted. The website also features a searchable HPTN publications database.

Study-specific portal pages allow each protocol team to work interactively. The portals may contain documents that are complete, such as the study-specific protocol manual or it may be used for multiple team members to create and edit documents for study use.

The design and maintenance of the HPTN website is the responsibility of the LOC. Questions and comments on the website may be sent to: hptn@fhi360.org.

6.4.2 HPTN Use of Social Media

The HPTN uses social media tools to achieve its goal of increasing community engagement in all aspects of HPTN's research agenda among members of communities that are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS, but are traditionally underrepresented in HIV prevention research. The primary social media tools utilized by the HPTN are [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). The HPTN engagement efforts on those sites primarily focuses on building a dialogue with HIV and non-HIV specific health organizations, advocacy, professional, academic and civic groups in an effort to encourage community partners to build a more comprehensive understanding of the critical need for an ongoing, robust HIV prevention research agenda and, in turn, transfer that knowledge to their staff and to the community members whom they serve.

Posts made to the HPTN's social media sites include announcements and updates about HPTN studies and about activities such as webinars, conference presentations and publications. In addition, information about relevant articles, conference announcements, and links to other materials such as community partner and HPTN sites' community events are posted by HPTN staff as well as by social media followers. Other HPTN social media activities include promoting posts and hosting and participating in Twitter Chats and Facebook Events.