



THE UNIVERSITY
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at CHAPEL HILL



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NEWS LETTER | April 2024

Second Edition



**Our Community Engagement Partners
Blossom into the Spring Season**

MESSAGE FROM OUR OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (OCE) MANAGER

By Alicia Diggs, CFAR Office of Community Engagement Manager

Happy spring everyone! This is the season when the leaves grow, the flowers bloom, and the weather is warm.

In this edition, we're thrilled to shine a spotlight on the invaluable contributions of our community partners. Their dedication and collaboration are the cornerstone of our mission to advance HIV/AIDS research and support within our communities.

Highlighting recent endeavors, UNC had the privilege of participating in a stigma training workshop hosted by NMAC's Escalate program in Albuquerque, NM. This training underscores our commitment to combatting stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, equipping our team with essential tools to foster understanding and empathy.

As we delve into the stories and achievements of our partners, we invite you to join us in celebrating their profound impact on our shared journey towards a healthier, more inclusive future.



Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our cause. Together, we can create lasting change and support those affected by HIV/AIDS.



Spotlight: UNC CFAR Office of Community Engagement Intern

By Jalynn Harvey-NCCU Public Health Student

As an introduction to myself, my name is Jalynn Harvey, and I am a senior at North Carolina Central University pursuing a bachelor's degree in public health education. Throughout these several weeks of interning at UNC CFAR, I've become fond of my internship and topic. I have attended several meetings, workshops, and activities related to my interest in HIV particularly in the black community. As I begin my professional career, I believe that these professional gatherings, events, and workshops will help me create essential ties. The contacts and relationships I've made can help me find work once I graduate, serve as references for my resumes and link me to future opportunities.

While observing the lectures in the HIV, I learned that an HIV diagnosis was a death sentence 25 years ago. Today, that is no longer the case thanks to cutting-edge antiretroviral medications that operate by keeping a patient's viral load low or suppressing the virus, allowing their immune system to remain healthy. I've also discovered from other organizations and programs, such as Risk To Reasons, that in the past women were not treated equally with males since officials believed HIV was a homosexual cancer rather than a virus that could and would spread to others regardless of gender. I am thrilled to learn more about HIV while working on my special project during the next few weeks.

I've realized that I'm engaged in the right area of interest, as proven by the small things. I've been able to perform to show my enthusiasm for this career.



I was fortunate enough to attend the NC AIDS Action Network's: Crowns and Cupcakes for National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day event, where I participated by volunteering. Hearing the stories and information from the various women who chose to speak made me emotional, as they have come so far, and I am proud of the amount of pride and grace they have shown themselves along the way. Ms. Alicia Diggs, I am grateful for the opportunity to be your intern and demonstrate why this will continue to be my specialty.

Fast Track Cities Durham

By Randy C. Rogers, MS, BSSW-Fast Track Cities Durham Coordinator

Fast Track Cities is a global HIV prevention initiative, and its overarching goal is to end HIV transmission. Fast Track Cities Durham is one of the international partners working towards achieving this goal via advocacy, policy development, community engagement, and educational programming. All activities are informed by Fast Track Cities Durham's strategic plan and input from the advisory group.

The Fast Track Cities Durham Community Advisory Group's primary objective is to inform, guide, shape, support and evaluate the three core global objectives with an emphasis on Durham. With a 95% success rate by year 2030, these aims include: 1) Providing HIV prevention and treatment education along with increasing "accessible" testing efforts in underserved communities; 2) Creating a social media presence to educate, elevate awareness and combat HIV stigma by addressing it as a definitive barrier and providing concrete strategies and tips to end it; 3) Promoting the benefits of PrEP and TasP (Treatment as Prevention) as viable tools to prevent HIV and viral suppression (Undetectable = Untransmittable). This group meets quarterly for updates, sharing, guidance, planning, delegation and process evaluation.



Fast Track Cities Durham also has two active social media accounts: Facebook and Instagram. The purpose of these accounts is to promote the Fast Track Cities Durham Initiative, HIV prevention and treatment education, and HIV related community resources. We also aim to address the debilitating barriers of stigma as well as ways to "inclusively" combat it. Relevant content is developed, and supportive information is posted to these sites on a regular basis.

Some of Fast Track Cities Durham activities to date are the annual curation of World AIDS Day for the Durham County Government, the Women and PrEP Symposium, Social Media HIV Prevention and Treatment Campaign featuring area artist Linette Knight, "Moving from "Risk" to "Reasons" workshop and workshops on addressing stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings. Please consider following us on our social media platforms outlined below.



Fast-Track Cities

Reducing HIV Related Stigma in North Carolina



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**



NC Communicable Disease Branch Stigma Reduction Toolkit



By Caressa Harding, MA- Data to Action Manager HIV/STD/Hepatitis Unit

In 2019, the NCDHHS, DPH, Communicable Disease Branch (CDB) finalized the Ending HIV Epidemic (ETE) Plan for North Carolina. The plan was clear that all work would be viewed from an anti-stigma lens, and the state would work to assure that all people have equal and unbiased access to testing, to care, and to services. However, due to a lack of funding to implement a statewide anti-stigma initiative and campaign, the Data to Action team looked for other resources to support this effort.

The Data to Action team, along with staff from other program areas were chosen to participate in NMAC's Minority HIV/AIDS Fund (MHAF) Initiative – Ending Stigma through Collaboration and Lifting All to Empowerment (ESCALATE) Project. The project was a 15-month (Nov 2021- Jan 2023) training and capacity building initiative specifically designed to address HIV related stigma, and works directly with RWHAP Parts A, B, C and D organizations. After examining HIV data collected across the state, the newly formed Stigma Reduction Team (SRT) determined that a toolkit would serve as the product outcome for the ESCALATE project. The SRT researched resources to include in the stigma reduction toolkit that would assist state funded agencies in the Regional Network of Care and Prevention to address HIV related stigma in their work and community settings.

The Stigma Reduction Toolkit is a guide that provides resources to compliment and work hand in hand with the ETE Plan for NC. The toolkit offers information and evidence-based strategies to assess, plan, implement, communicate, and evaluate HIV related stigma initiatives. The CDB Stigma Reduction Toolkit is tentatively scheduled to be released for early summer.

North Carolina Participates in NMAC's Escalate Training in Albuquerque, NM

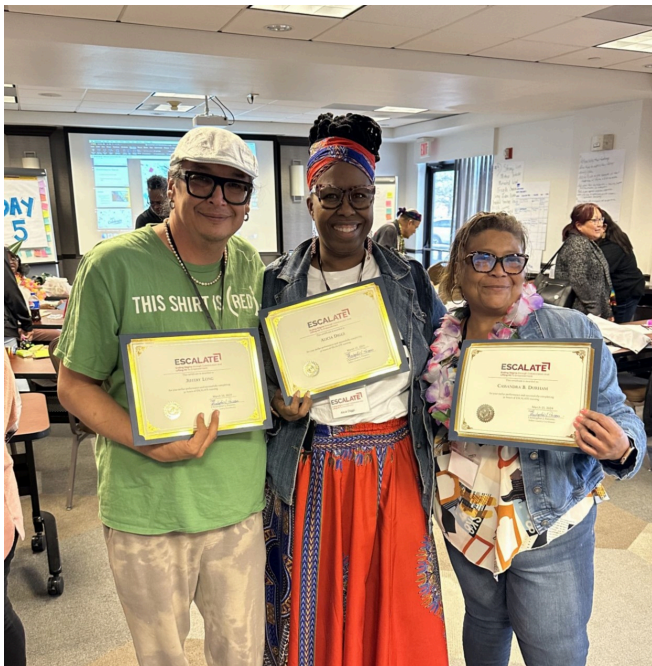


By Jeffrey Long, SEEDS of Healing Inc. Board of Directors

NMAC's (National Minority AIDS Council) "ESCALATE" trains and empowers participants to recognize and address HIV stigma within every level of the Ryan White HIV AIDS Program. ESCALATE will engage Stigma Reducing Teams (a minimum of two participant teams) within the 57 jurisdictions identified in Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America (EHE) with a particular focus on reducing stigma towards transgender/gender nonconforming individuals, men who have sex with men, the Black/African American community, Latinx experience, and Indian Country and Native Alaska.

The Escalate training is making a significant impact by empowering individuals living with HIV to contribute meaningfully to the planning and delivery of HIV services, especially in communities disproportionately affected by the virus. Attending the training in Albuquerque, NM was enlightening and provided valuable insights that I can bring back to strengthen the SEEDS of Healing board and advocacy efforts. I am feeling empowered and grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow personally and professionally.

I would also like to take this time to extend a grateful thank you to Alicia Diggs, the Office of Community Engagement Manager of the CFAR and Cassandra Durham, the Program Coordinator of the North Carolina HIV Training & Education Center, for the opportunity to learn more of the dynamics with experiments done to the Black and Indigenous populations by connecting back to colonization. I had a wonderful time learning, spending my evenings with family in the area, and meeting new contacts in Indigenous Hospital Services (IHS), that I can reach out to for support.



On the left: Jeffrey Long, Alicia Diggs, and Cassandra Durham

Upcoming Events/Conferences

Alliance of AIDS Services and AIDS Walk and 5K Run

Saturday, May 4th at William Peace University (15 Peace Street, Raleigh, NC 27604).
The 5K Race will start at 8:45 AM
The 5K Fun Run/Walk will start at 9:00 AM

LGBT Health Workforce Conference

May 2-4, 2024
New York, NY
bngap.org/lgbthwconf

The American Conference for the Treatment of HIV (ACTHIV)

May 2-4, 2024
Atlanta, GA
www.acthiv.org

National Latinx Conference on HIV/HCV/SUD

May 2-4, 2024
El Paso, TX
www.latinosandhiv.org/

SYNC

May 29-31, 2024
Washington, DC
www.syncconference.org

International Workshop on HIV & Women

April 12-13, 2024
Washington, DC
academicmedicaleducation.com

STI Engage 2024

June 2-5, 2024
Washington, DC
www.ncsddc.org/sti-engage-2024

Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit

April 19 – 20, 2024, Seattle, Washington

The Continuum 2024: International Association of Providers of AIDS Care

June 9-11, 2024, Puerto Rico

International AIDS Conference

July 22-26, 2024, Munich, Germany

US Conference on HIV/AIDS

Sept 12-15, 2024, New Orleans, LA

HIV/AIDS Upcoming Awareness Days

April 10 - **National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day #NYHAAD**

May 18 - **HIV Vaccine Awareness Day #HVAD**

May 19 - **National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Days #APIMay19**

June 5 - **HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day #HLTSAD**

June 27 - **National HIV Testing Day #HIVTestingDay**

July 21 - **Zero HIV Stigma Day #ZeroHIVStigmaDay**



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