

Providence/Boston Center for AIDS Research



HIV & ORAL HEALTH SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP (SWG)



Dr. Curt Beckwith

HIV & Oral Health SWG Co-Leader, Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases, Alpert Medical School, Brown University



Dr. Michelle Henshaw

HIV & Oral Health SWG Co-Leader, Associate Dean of Global & Population Health; Professor of Health Policy & Health Services Research, Boston University

The [HIV & Oral Health Scientific Working Group \(SWG\)](#) recently launched with initial meetings and growing interest. Dr. Michelle Henshaw (BU School of Dental Medicine) and Dr. Curt Beckwith (The Miriam Hospital/Brown University Infectious Diseases) are Co-Directors, and Dr. Hisashi Akiyama, Research Assistant Professor of Microbiology, Boston University School of Medicine, serves as Associate Director.

Drs. Henshaw and Beckwith are currently funded by the NIDCR on a study titled "Testing and Texting in Community Health Center Dental Clinics to Diagnose and Prevent HIV Infection" which helped create momentum to start the SWG. This past the summer, Dr. Hongen Yin from NIDCR presented research priorities of the institute and future RFA opportunities. The group recently welcomed a presentation by Paul Fidel, Jr, PhD, Department Chair, Oral and Craniofacial Biology and Associate Dean for Research at the Louisiana State University School of Dentistry.

Upcoming HIV & Oral Health SWG Meetings:

Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 12pm-1pm EST

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 12pm-1pm EST

Tuesday, June 4, 2024, 12pm-1pm EST

If you would like to be added to the HIV & Oral Health Scientific Working Group listserv, please email Aurielle Ross (aross5@lifespan.org).

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS

October 5, 2023

8am-1:15pm EST

Lifespan's Office of Research's Annual Research Day

Rhode Island Hospital, George Auditorium



Lifespan

[More Information](#)

October 19-20, 2023

Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine: Annual Department of Medicine Evans Days

Leslie Ramirez from the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) program will be presenting the program's work on 'Going to the Source: Discussions With Early and Mid-Career Faculty From Groups Underrepresented in Biomedical Research to Develop and Enhance CFAR Services'.



EXCEPTIONAL CARE. WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

[More Information](#)

October 23-24, 2023

9am-4pm EST

Mentoring the Mentors Workshop for HIV Researchers

This event is hosted by the Harvard CFAR and will be held at the MGH Center for Global Health.

Registration closes October 6, 2023!



[Register Here](#)

November 21, 2023

11am-12pm EST

Prov/Bos CFAR HIV and Substance Use Researchers Meet and Greet

Substance Use Research Core (SURC) is hosting a fall virtual meet-and-greet event to connect HIV/substance use researchers across our institutions.



Attendees will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and their research and to meet others working in this field.

[Register Here](#)

December 28, 2023

K Award Workshop

- Trainees enroll with mentor: **December 28, 2023**
- Specific aims page (first review): **January 8, 2024**
- Full proposal for mock review: **March 12, 2024**
- NIH due date: **May 7, 2024**



Dr. Ira Wilson has recently been appointed the Associate Provost for Academic Space at Brown University and will be stepping down from his role of Co-Director of the Prov/Bos CFAR Developmental Core.

Thank you Ira for your years of service to the CFAR! We wish you well on your new position.

For more information on Ira's new position, please [click here](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

October 22, 2023

Notice of Funding Opportunity NIDCR: Collaborative Science to Achieve Disruptive Innovations in Dental, Oral and Craniofacial (DOC) Research

Applications due November 22, 2023

- ▶ Letters of Intent are required and due October 23, 2023
- ▶ For those with accepted LOIs, full applications are due November 22, 2023

[More Details](#)

November 1, 2023

Letters of Intent for Prov/Bos CFAR International Developmental Grants

Applications due January 8, 2024

- ▶ Letters of Intent are required and due no later than 5:00pm EST on November 1, 2023
- ▶ [Submit LOI here](#)
- ▶ For those with accepted LOIs, full applications are due by 5:00pm EST on January 8, 2023

[More Details](#)



SCIENCE SPOTLIGHT



**Hisashi Akiyama,
PhD**

Research Assistant
Professor,
Department of
Virology, Immunology
& Microbiology,
Boston University

Dr. Hisashi Akiyama is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Virology, Immunology & Microbiology, Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine and an Associate Director of the HIV and Oral Health SWG.

His research goal is to understand HIV pathogenesis. Particularly, he is interested in the role of myeloid cells such as macrophages and microglia in immune response to HIV infection. Current studies are focused on understanding the viral and host factors involved in macrophage activation and its impact on HIV pathogenesis.

Outside of the lab, he enjoys running.



**Matthew Mara,
DMD, EdD**

Assistant Professor,
General Dentistry,
Boston University

Dr. Matthew Mara DMD, EdD was a recipient of an NIH subaward forming the first official collaboration between the Providence-Boston CFAR and the Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine.

Since then, he received a CFAR development award exploring facilitators and barriers to HIV rapid testing in dental school clinics and is a co-investigator developing provider training modules for Dr. Curt Beckwith and Dr. Michelle Henshaw's project exploring HIV rapid testing in Boston area Community Health Centers. Dr. Mara hopes to continue to develop educational interventions to promote interdisciplinary collaborative care targeted to improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

In his free time you might see him trying a new restaurant with his wife and 9-month old daughter, Vivian!

FEATURED WORK

[Dr. Sabrina Assoumou](#) has recently received R01 funding from NIDA for her work on "[PrEP and MOUD Rapid Access for Persons who Inject Drugs: the CHORUS+ Study](#)".

The goal of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of the CHORUS+ intervention on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake and engagement in care. CHORUS+ is a theory-based intervention providing a comprehensive approach to the syndemic of opioid use disorder and HIV.

[Dr. Larry Brown](#) and [Dr. Michelle Henshaw](#) have recently received R56 funding from NIDCR for their work on "[Identifying Factors to Improve Dental and Mental Health Care among People with HIV](#)".

The [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Program \(DEIA\)](#) has published their Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pathway Initiative (CDEIPI) JAIDS Supplement work entitled, [Going to the Source: Discussions With Early and Mid-Career Faculty From Groups Underrepresented in Biomedical Research to Develop and Enhance CFAR Services](#).

To read the entire JAIDS volume, CDEIPI Overview and CDEIPI-wide Evaluation, and other CFAR's work, please click [click here](#).

C-CERC CORNER

Congratulations to Paul Goulet (Pauly) Chair of the Providence/Boston CFAR - CCERC who was recently named as Vice Chair of the N3C!

The National CFAR CAB Coalition (N3C) represents the Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR) Community Action/Advisory Boards (CABs) as a national group of key stakeholders in HIV research, and provides a resource for community engagement and involvement in national CFAR initiatives. The N3C serves as a resource for the creation, development, and sustainability of CFAR CABs.



Paul Goulet
Chair, Prov/Bos CFAR
Community Engaged
Research Council (C-
CERC)

In an effort to enhance partnerships between community members and HIV researchers and support the development and sustainability of CFAR CABs, the National CFAR CAB Coalition (NCCC) was created in May of 2014. The goals of the NCCC are to increase collaborations between community and HIV researchers through community-based participatory research (CBPR) and other collaborative projects, to mentor current and new CFAR CABs and their community constituents in research and funding processes, and to increase community influence on HIV research priorities and agendas. The NCCC is in a unique position to institutionalize community and research collaborations in all areas of HIV research at the local, regional, and national level.

Mission:

We represent CFAR CABs as a national advocacy group and resource for community involvement in National CFAR Initiatives. We are also a resource for the creation, development, and sustainability of CFAR CABs.

Our Purpose:

- To provide expertise on community ideas and concerns at National CFAR meetings.
- To advocate that all present and future CFARs have an active CAB.
- To provide recommendations and consultation regarding future cross-CFAR initiatives, e.g.: Enhanced Comprehensive HIV Prevention Planning (ECHPP), and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Network (SBSRN)
- To provide community input on RFA development of CFAR grants, e.g.: Developmental Awards, New Investigator Awards.
- To advocate for additional resources for CFAR and CAB community-based research at the national level.
- To centralize consultation services and resources for individual CFAR CABs in the following

areas:

- Community outreach and engagement (inclusive of international settings)
- Membership recruitment, training, and retention
- Interaction between community and CFAR researchers
- Communication platforms
- Review of research design, protocol, implementation and dissemination
- Funding sources

OPEN DOOR HEALTH UPDATE

[Dr. Amy Nunn](#) and [Dr. Philip Chan](#) often use their research for advocacy. Over the years, their research and clinical practice at Open Door Health find that prohibitively high copayments and deductibles for PrEP are associated with failure to pick up prescriptions at pharmacies, as well as higher HIV transmission rates. Several ODH patients have contracted HIV after not filling PrEP prescriptions because of copayments or deductibles. See their publication, "[Novel population-level proxy measures for suboptimal HIV preexposure prophylaxis initiation and persistence in the USA](#)".



Recently, Nunn and Chan led an advocacy campaign in RI for legislation that would preclude insurance companies from charging prohibitively high copayments and deductibles for PrEP. That bill, sponsored by Senator Melissa Murray from Woonsocket, required companies to cover once daily oral prep, as well as injectable prep. The bill was approved by both houses of the legislature in June 2023, and RI Governor Governor McKee signed that bill into law in June 2023 at Open Door Health. The bill is one of the most comprehensive PrEP laws in the country, and goes into effect in January 2024.

For more information, please [click here](#).



The Providence/Boston CFAR Cores are available to help you with your research. Please click the link to request services.

Request Core Services

ACKNOWLEDGE CFAR (P30AI042853)

Funding from NIH for the CFAR is dependent on evidence that the CFAR is providing value added in the conduct of HIV/AIDS research. One way this support is documented is through the acknowledgement of



the Providence/Boston CFAR in publications, abstracts and presentations. If you have received funding, consultation, mentorship, research support services, materials, training, access to shared equipment and/or space from one of the CFAR Cores, please acknowledge the CFAR by using the following statement:

This work was facilitated by the Providence/Boston Center for AIDS Research (P30AI042853).

Subscribe to this Newsletter

The Providence/Boston Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) is a joint research effort between Brown University/Lifespan and Boston University/Boston Medical Center. The Providence/Boston Center for AIDS research is devoted to the pursuit of translational research to reduce the burden of HIV infection worldwide, with special focus on substance users, women, MSM, justice-involved persons, and at-risk youth. To achieve this goal, we are committed to fostering emerging HIV investigators both domestically and within resource-limited settings.

