



POSITIVE HEALTH PROGRAM:

Better HIV Health Through Patient Care, Education and Research

What a difference a generation makes. In 1980, few people had ever heard of AIDS, much less contracted it. By 1983, the city of San Francisco was addressing AIDS as a public health crisis. That year, forward-thinking public health leaders at San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center (SFGHMC) established the UCSF Positive Health Program (PHP) offering treatment and compassion to HIV-infected people who often had nowhere else to turn.

While it began as a community clinic with a staff of five, today PHP is recognized as a world leader in patient care and research. The program includes a variety of specialized, primary care clinics located at SFGHMC's renowned Ward 86, the administration of numerous national and international clinical trials, and diverse HIV education programs. Headquartered on the SFGHMC campus in Building 80, the program features an interdisciplinary approach that integrates medical, social, psychological and educational services.

Some 3,500 patients—roughly one-third of San Francisco's HIV-infected population—receive treatment and/or care through the program. More than a third of them are also infected with Hepatitis C, and 20 percent are women.

"Our patients have complex problems. Many are grappling with multiple medical issues, substance abuse and difficult living situations," explains Dr. Diane Havlir, director of PHP and professor of medicine at UCSF. "Helping them requires concern for the entire spectrum of their care."

To that end, the program comprises three major areas of focus: patient care, education and research. Patient care comes first, and collaboration with community-based organizations is key to making it work. Catherine Lyons, nurse practitioner in charge of PHP's Women's Services, explains:

"Let's say you have a patient who is not only HIV-infected, but also homeless and abusing drugs. You might see that person once, give her initial medical treatment and then make a follow-up appointment," says Lyons. "If she's not receiving the full range of services she needs, the chances of her showing up again are very low."

This is where a case manager comes in, to maintain ongoing communication with patients, and coordinate the efforts of the myriad agencies and services that can turn people's lives around.

A variety of integrated services are available directly through PHP as well, including a dedicated women's clinic (see article, *PHP Women's Clinic*, page 2) and a support group for patients co-infected with HIV and Hepatitis C. And, for patients who have been discharged from the main hospital, Positive Health Access to Services and Treatment (PHAST) ensures a quick and smooth transition directly into specialized care at Ward 86.

Such extraordinary service has not gone unnoticed. In fact, PHP has been ranked as the top facility in the country for HIV/AIDS care by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Havlir says the stellar rating is due, in large part, to the extraordinary collaboration between UCSF and the San Francisco Department of Public Health at San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center.

"Our faculty members look at questions relating to new HIV drugs, drug resistance, and long-term non-progressors (i.e. people who stay well without treatment)," she says. "By understanding how these people stay healthy, we can develop effective vaccines to fight HIV."

While the work begins at home, the effects are felt worldwide. An active consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO) and founding member of WHO's Global HIV Drug Resistance Surveillance Network, Havlir plays an instrumental role in shaping international policy. Her work has taken her to Latin America, Africa and India, helping people in resource-limited settings find the best ways to treat HIV. Now she is leading studies in Africa that examine the relationship between HIV and tuberculosis, and HIV and malaria. PHP staff are also training and educating healthcare workers in South Africa, Tanzania and the Ivory Coast, providing skills and information for addressing HIV in their own countries.

As PHP's reputation has grown, so have requests from clinicians and researchers for seminars tailored to their specific needs. The program's Education Unit offers preceptorships that provide practical experience and training under the supervision of SFGHMC AIDS experts and specialists. A weekly Grand Rounds lecture series highlights new medications, treatment protocols and care-delivery issues for medical students, residents and visiting medical providers. Webcast on the UCSF School of Medicine's

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HIV InSite, (<http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu>), the Grand Rounds can be seen by anyone in the world who has access to the internet.

PHP also produces the Medical Management of AIDS, an annual conference that draws hundreds of local, regional and international providers who learn about the latest advances in HIV clinical care.

Now Havlir and her staff are working to develop strategies to address the future of AIDS. "Training the next generation of HIV clinicians and clinical researchers is extremely important," she says. "We need to sustain the commitment to improving care. That, and ensuring that our facilities and staffing are sufficient to carry us forward."

Havlir was working as a clinician at UCSF and SFGHMC in the early 1980s when the AIDS epidemic broke. After spending 12 years as an HIV clinician and clinical researcher at UC San Diego, she returned to San Francisco in 2002 to head up the Positive Health Program.

"Coming back here was like coming home," she says. "San Francisco's commitment to excellence in care for HIV-infected patients, to serving the underserved, and to improving patient care through research and education is second to none."✍

PHP Women's Clinic: Providing Special Care for HIV-Infected Women

On Thursday mornings, there is something decidedly female about the Positive Health Program (PHP) at SF General. That is when the program dedicates clinic time to primary medical and gynecologic care for women only.

"Before the women's clinic opened in 1996, women would sit in the waiting room among mostly men, and feel completely isolated," says Catherine Lyons, nurse practitioner in charge of PHP's Women's Services. "Now there is a place for them to feel connected."

Every Thursday morning, more than 50 women come to the clinic, eat a nourishing breakfast and socialize together. Spontaneous activities such as manicures, clothing exchanges and ceremonies to remember friends are common events. At the same time, the women also gain access to invaluable resources, including primary care providers, gynecologists, mental health professionals and an array of other services.

"We encourage chatting and information-sharing," says Lyons. "That, in and of itself, is often what gets people to come in."

Lyons tells how collaboration among agencies and disciplines helped one young HIV-infected mother:

"When Edith (not her real name) came to PHP three years ago at the age of 23, she was facing serious challenges, including being HIV-infected. Edith had a history of physical and emotional abuse, and she was using alcohol and marijuana. She had just moved to San Francisco to be with a man she met on the internet.

She also had two children, both under the age of three. While she was a loving mother, Edith didn't have the necessary skills and patience to handle her children. Her kids were out of control.

Edith left the boyfriend she moved here to be with, and our staff found a temporary place for her in a homeless shelter for families. Still, she wasn't able to handle her children; we referred them to Child Protective Services.

Even though Edith had medical problems, there was no way to address them effectively until other aspects of her life were stabilized. We brought in a social worker to help her sort through her history of trauma and addiction. We also brought in a case manager to coordinate her treatment.

The social worker and case manager helped find housing for Edith. In the meantime, she became involved with another man and became pregnant again. Our Bay Area Perinatal AIDS Center (BAPAC) provided her with comprehensive perinatal services. With the help of BAPAC, Edith made it through her pregnancy and gave birth to a healthy baby boy last December.

Edith continues to see me, she has ongoing case management and she continues not to use drugs or alcohol. She has been working with a mental health worker from the Center for Special Problems, which is part of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. And she participates in a group for women with kids, run by Rita Da Cascia, an intensive case management program of Catholic Charities.

Some people say this kind of treatment is too expensive, and question why we should put so much effort into one woman. If you look at the alternative, she would be on the street or in jail, and the children would be in foster care. Then the costs are so much greater at every level.

There are so many rewarding aspects to this job. I've seen women who, against considerable odds, rebound from addiction, homelessness and severe illness. Then they go on to succeed."✍



*San Francisco General Hospital
Gala Fundraiser
benefiting
the Dorothy Washington Nursing Scholarship Fund*

Keynote Speaker:
Kamala D. Harris, District Attorney

Location The Ritz-Carlton
600 Stockton Street, San Francisco

Date Thursday, May 4, 2006

Reception 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Dinner 7:30pm - 11:00pm

Dress Cocktail

Ticket Price: \$175.00

For more information,
please contact Katherine Moe, katherine.moe@sfdph.org
OR 415-206-4478 OR www.sfghf.net

HEROES & HEARTS



A Special Thanks to All Who Helped Make the Heroes & Hearts Luncheon A Success



Emcee KTVU news anchor Julie Haener; event co-chairs Judy Guggenheim and Pam Baer; Mayor Gavin Newsom; with Heroes Antionette Griffin, a SFGHMC psychiatric nurse consultant; Lt. Joe Garrity; Dr. Geoffrey Manley, SFGHMC's chief of neurotrauma; SFFD's Joseph Giacomini and Charles Faciani.

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Free Public Viewing of Hearts at Harry Bridges Plaza, Embarcadero, April 1 - April 30.



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Of Note

SFGH Foundation is proud to announce the hiring of **Bonnie Gross** to the position of Development Assistant. Bonnie is a recent graduate of University of Colorado.

Dr. William Schecter, Chief of Surgery at SFGHMC, received the 2006 Pride in the Profession Award, presented by the American Medical Association Foundation. This award was created to honor physicians who, through their service, bring a sense of pride to the medical profession and whose actions promote the art and science of medicine and the advancement of public health.

The Bay Area Perinatal AIDS Center (BAPAC) received a \$25,000 grant from the March of Dimes Chapter Community Grants Program. This support will expand BAPAC's services in three ways: Increasing capacity to perform preconception counseling on-campus and conduct educational sessions in the community; Providing enhanced genetic screening to high-risk HIV-infected women receiving prenatal care through the program; Supporting goal of universal HIV testing of women seeking prenatal care at SFGHMC, and providing specialized care to those found to be HIV-infected.

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