

**New England HIV Implementation Science Network  
Hard to Reach/High Risk Populations Work Group Meeting  
December 12, 2014, 10 – 11:30 AM**

**Chair:** Don Operario (Brown University)  
**Co-Chair:** Jacob van den Berg (Brown University)  
**CIRA Staff:** Dini Harsono, Jim Pettinelli

**Participants:**

Michael Bassett (VT Department of Health)  
Thomas Bertrand (RI Department of Health)  
Patricia Cioe (Brown University)  
Chris Cole (AIDS Project New Haven)  
Brian Datcher (Community Member)  
Gai Doran (Yale University)  
Monika Doshi (Saath)  
Lisa Eaton (University of Connecticut)  
David Fiellin (Yale University)  
Brian Forsyth (Yale University)  
Paul Goulet (MA Department of Public Health)  
Jianghong Li (Institute for Community Research)  
Christopher Kahler (Brown University)  
David Manning (Brown University)  
Erin McBurney (Yale University)  
Elaine O'Keefe (Yale University)  
Brian Palmer (Gilead)  
Courtney Peasant (Yale University)  
Adeya Powell (Yale University)  
Robert Reardon (Tapestry Health)  
Kate Stoddard (Yale University)  
Peg Weeks (Institute for Community Research)

**1. Overview of the Network and Hard to Reach/High Risk Populations Work Group**

- Don provided an overview of the Network and the Work Groups. The work group goals are:
  1. To stimulate and develop new cross-state and cross-center collaborations
  2. To map out priority research areas or areas where there is synergistic expertise/interest
  3. To identify/develop/refine ideas for research grants (for pilot studies to stimulate larger studies, or even larger studies if there's readiness)
- The Hard to Reach Work Group met first to identify priority populations and critical research areas that will help develop ideas for research projects within the other 3 work groups, i.e., 1) technology and social media, 2) modeling and cost utility analysis, and 3) mapping. The goal is for all four work groups to hold two web meetings by January 2015 before convening an in-person workshop on February 5.

**2. Definitions of Hard to Reach/High Risk Populations**

- Jacob facilitated the discussion around groups and sub groups considered by participants as hard to reach and high risk seen from both practice and research perspectives.
- Men who have sex with men (MSM)
  - MSM who meet sex partners online and are not identified regionally
  - Young MSM who use a variety of social media platforms, e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
  - MSM who use substance (alcohol and drug)
  - MSM who attend private sex parties.
- Individuals in substance abuse treatment and/or those who are seeking treatment.

- Women
  - Women who are in abusive relationships
  - Women of color in monogamous relationships with a male who often fear testing and have concerns about stigma
  - Women who do not know the status of their partner(s) and/or do not use social media.
- Incarcerated men and women.
- Other key groups: sex workers, transgender persons, homeless populations, high school dropouts.

### 3. Critical Research Areas in New England

- Outreach and prevention education programs are less fundable although proved effective in reducing high risk behaviors.
- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
  - Misunderstanding and misinformation related to PrEP on the street and in the internet (e.g., having zero chance of transmission while on PrEP)
- Use of technology/social media
  - Effectiveness of HIV online information and how it impacts risk behaviors among MSM of color
  - Collaborating with MSM social network websites/apps such as Jack'd that has 19.6k followers on Twitter to gather data and recruit
  - Setting up prevention and/or intervention messages at the beginning of a login page at social network websites before user can start search for potential partners
  - Technology gap between African Americans and Whites in general and MSM populations
  - Recruiting MSM of color from social network websites for input on 1) what they are seeking from these websites, 2) ideas for HIV prevention strategies.
- Exploring the mobility of MSM and other high risk groups in the New England areas and how it relates to HIV transmission dynamics and potential outreach and intervention designs.
- Utilizing peer approach to improve HIV education and testing and specifically HIV-positive peers to engage MSM of color in care.
- What are the differences in HIV/AIDS risk factors and sexual behaviors between individuals who use social media and the ones who do not?
- Identifying transgender persons through social and community mapping.
- Using existing datasets for formative and descriptive data.

### 4. Grant opportunities

- CIRA/LTB CFAR Joint Pilot Project Funding  
<http://cira.yale.edu/news/new-multi-institutional-pilot-project-funding-opportunity>  
 Letter of intent due date - Monday, February 2, 2015  
 Full application due date - Friday, March 20, 2015
- NIH Dissemination and Implementation Research in Health  
 PAR-13-055 (R01) <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-13-055.html>  
 PAR-13-056 (R03) <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-13-056.html>  
 PAR-13-054 (R21) <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-13-054.html>

### 5. Next Steps

- A summary of the web meeting and slides will be distributed via email and uploaded to the Network page on CIRA website: <http://cira.yale.edu/research/new-england-hiv-implementation-science-network>.
- Dini will send a poll to schedule the second meeting of the work group toward the end of January 2015.