



# NC CoOp Notes

*A newsletter serving the communities of Durham, Wake, Orange and Mecklenburg Counties, North Carolina*

Volume 10, Issue 2

Summer 2009

## **Working in the Community, Supporting People Where They Are**

The mission of the CoOp studies is to help substance abusers in community-based settings. Our research aims to reduce substance use, HIV/STI/HCV-risk, sexual violence, and comorbid conditions; and to increase risk-protective factors that improve health and well-being.

Our work involves collaborating with communities to address social problems by

- using nontraditional outreach methods to reach populations that typically do not access services,
- fostering community participation to develop and evaluate appropriate interventions, and
- sharing the research findings with the community.

Under the direction of Dr. Wendee Wechsberg, we have field sites in Durham, Wake, and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina, as well as in South Africa. In each community, we forge partnerships between RTI's scientific expertise and community agencies and community advisory boards made up of citizens and professionals dedicated to improving the lives of substance abusers.

## **NC PROJECT UPDATES**

### **Young Women's CoOp**

The formative work of the Young Women's CoOp (formerly called the Teen CoOp) is ongoing. To help with the adaptation of the intervention, we conducted focus groups and individual interviews, and conducted meetings with our Teen Advisory Board to learn more about issues of sexual health, violence, and substance use. Currently, we are pretesting the questionnaire that will be used in the larger study and planning the pilot test of the intervention. We recently filmed teens expressing their opinions about teens and risk. Some of the experiences they shared will be included in the intervention. In addition, we are currently recruiting African-American young women aged 16 to 18 for questionnaire pretesting and the pilot test phase of this study. The study findings will be presented at the National HIV Prevention Conference in August and the American Public Health Association (APHA) Meeting in November.

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*If you know of any young women who may be interested in participating in this study, please contact Rachel Middlesteadt Ellerson at 919-618-5410 or [rachelm@rti.org](mailto:rachelm@rti.org).*

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The Young Women's CoOp is funded under Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant 5UR6PS000665-02.

### **Latinas' CoOp — NEW STUDY**

To aid in the adaptation of a "best-evidence" HIV prevention intervention for Latinas, RTI is conducting focus groups with staff members from community-based organizations (CBOs) who work with Latinas. This study, led by Amy Hernandez, MA, will collect information on the services that CBOs provide to Latinas and identify effective delivery mechanisms for a Latina HIV prevention program, including a review of and specific adaptations for the intervention cue cards. The study will improve our understanding of organizations working with Latinas in the Triangle, and the focus group findings will inform future projects with the Hispanic population.

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*If you have suggestions for contacts at local organizations that serve the Hispanic population, please pass them along to Amy Hernandez at 919-412-0172 or [ahernandez@rti.org](mailto:ahernandez@rti.org).*

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The Latinas' CoOp is funded by RTI International.

### **The Healthy "Little" Lives Project — NEW STUDY**

A UNC Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) seed grant was recently awarded to Dr. Michelle Kaufman to begin a collaborative research project with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Triangle. The development funds will be used to create a training program for Big Sisters called the Healthy "Little" Lives Project. This program will teach Big Sisters how to communicate effectively with their Little Sisters about sexual health issues, such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV. Participants will attend two training sessions with small groups of Big Sisters, as well as one session with their Little Sisters. The program will be pilot tested with up to 100 Big Sister-Little Sister mentor matches.

Dr. Kaufman was a Big Sister through the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program for 4 years in Connecticut, where she conducted a similar study. She continues to be in regular contact with her Little Sister, who is now 14 years old.

The Healthy "Little" Lives Project is funded under the University of North Carolina's Center for AIDS Research (UNC CFAR) grant number P30 AI50410.

## “Dead-Space Syringe” Project — **NEW STUDY**

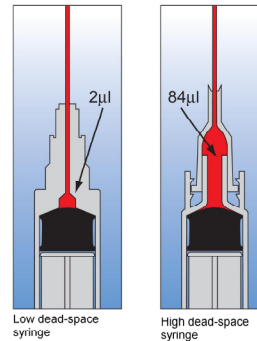
A small grant to study how the type of syringe used by injecting drug users (IDUs) may impact HIV transmission rates in Europe and Asia was awarded to Dr. Bill Zule. The project is exploring the relationship between the type of syringes that IDUs use and HIV in a city. With the plunger depressed, all syringes retain fluid in what has been termed “dead space” (see Figure 1).

- High dead-space syringes, which usually have detachable needles, retain fluid in the syringe cannula, the needle hub, and the needle itself.
- Low dead-space syringes have a needle, which is usually permanently attached, that extends through the cannula to the base of the syringe barrel; fluid is only retained in the needle itself.

High dead-space syringes may hold more than 1,000 times more blood after use and rinsing than other types of syringes, which increases the risk for HIV transmission. This small study will review the literature and contact international researchers about HIV prevalence among IDUs and the types of syringes being used in different cities. If we find an association between use of high dead-space syringes and HIV prevalence, we will propose a larger study to determine if syringe type is impacting HIV injection risk.

The “Dead-Space Syringe” Project is funded under National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) grant R03DA026725.

Figure 1: Mean Volume of Fluid Retained with Plunger Depressed



## Men’s Attitudes on Sex & Health (MASH) Study

Enrollment for Dr. Zule’s MASH Study, funded by the CDC, ended in June. MASH is pilot testing a sexual risk reduction intervention for methamphetamine-using gay and bisexual men. A total of 36 men were recruited; 48% are HIV positive. We will be presenting preliminary findings at the CDC’s National HIV Prevention Conference in August.

The Men’s Attitudes on Sex & Health study is funded under CDC grant UR6PS000310.

## Sexual Acquisition and Transmission of HIV Cooperative Agreement Program (SATH-CAP)

The findings from the SATH-CAP study were published in July in a supplement to the *Journal of Urban Health*. The supplement includes two papers from the North Carolina site—one paper on transactional sex and another paper on bisexual men. The supplement is available at: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/j8u1641026k3/?p=25c482f244f94806a1cc2a6a78bceab&pi=4>

The Sexual Acquisition and Transmission of HIV Cooperative Agreement Program was funded under NIDA grant 1U01DA01373-01.

## Chronic Hepatitis Intervention Project for Drug Users (Hep-C)

Intervention outcomes from the Hep-C Project, which ended in 2008, were published in April in a supplement to the *American Journal of Public Health*.

The Chronic Hepatitis Intervention Project for Drug Users was funded under NIDA grant R01DA013763.

## Women’s CoOp II

If you missed our winter 2008 newsletter, we have officially ended all field work on the Women’s CoOp II project for now. As you may recall, the Women’s CoOp I began in 1998 and reached 938 women, 762 of whom were in the study. We began the continuation study in 2004 and reenrolled more than 460 of the women from the original study for booster intervention sessions and follow-up assessments. The study has ended and we are currently working on analyzing the outcomes and cost-effectiveness. The long-term study findings will be presented at the APHA Meeting in November.

The original Women’s CoOp has been the basis for our work with other at-risk populations and in other settings, including teens, pregnant women, sex workers in South Africa, and female IDUs in Russia. This intervention was found to be a “best-evidence” behavioral HIV prevention intervention by the CDC in 2007.

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*If you are interested in information regarding the Women’s CoOp, please contact Dr. Wendee Wechsberg at 919-541-6422 or [wmw@rti.org](mailto:wmw@rti.org).*

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The Women’s CoOp was funded under NIDA grant 2R01DA011609.



## Welcome to New Staff

### Winona (Nona) Poulton

has joined SATEI as a summer intern. Nona is a candidate for a Masters in Public Health in the Maternal and Child Health Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. She expects to complete her degree in December 2009. Nona is working on Dr. Zule’s “Dead-Space Syringe” project, leading the literature review and contacting international researchers and syringe exchange programs for data and samples of unused syringes.



### Nanette Antwi-Donkor

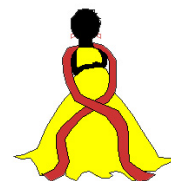
is a Research Assistant/Intern in SATEI on Dr. Wechsberg’s women’s projects. She is conducting literature reviews and supporting project staff. Nanette is pursuing her Master of Public Policy at Duke University. Previously, she worked as a research analyst for a public policy research firm in Baltimore. Her work included evaluating marriage/relationship and fatherhood programs across Maryland. Nanette holds a BA in Economics and Business from Wesleyan College.

## Pregnant Women's CoOp

The Pregnant Women's CoOp ended in February. The study findings were presented at the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) Conference in June.

We would like to give special thanks to all of the staff who worked on this project, especially Shirley Brown and Theresa Frye, who have worked with us since 2005. In addition, the following community providers helped to make this study possible. As always, thank you!

- Family Wellness and Recovery Services of NC–Hope Meadow Program
- Step by Step of Wake County
- Unlimited Alternatives
- Community Choices, Inc.
- Kinton Court Caseworks
- Southlight, Inc.–Wakeview (Methadone Treatment Program)
- Alcohol Treatment Center (ATC)
- Walter B. Jones Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center
- CASCADE of Durham
- Wake County Women's Center



The Pregnant Women's CoOp project is funded under NIDA grant 1R01DA020852.

## INTERNATIONAL PROJECT UPDATES

### Couples' CoOp in Cape Town, South Africa

The Couples' CoOp study is currently in the formative phase. The research team conducted focus groups earlier this year to collect information about drug use, sexual risk behaviors, and drinking venues in several Cape Town communities. The findings will be used to adapt the proposed interventions to address the challenges faced by couples in their communities and to find out how the locations of drinking venues and other community characteristics will affect the outcomes of the intervention. The study findings will be presented at the APHA Meeting in November.

The Couples' CoOp is funded under National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) grant R01AA018076-02.

### Western Cape Women's Health CoOp Study

As of June 2009, we have enrolled over 200 women from Cape Town in the study. We are collecting 3-month, 6-month, and 9-month follow-up assessments; the 12-month assessment will begin in September 2009. Preliminary study findings will be presented at the AIDS Impact conference in Gaborone, Botswana, in September.



The Western Cape Women's Health CoOp study is funded under grant 5R01HD058320-02 from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

### Russian Women's CoOp

The Russian Women's CoOp is testing an adapted version of the Women's Health CoOp for women at risk for injecting drug use and HIV. The study randomized 100 female IDUs into either a Woman-Focused intervention group or a Nutrition control group. Among participants, 91 women completed the 3-month follow-up assessment.

The study findings include the following:

- 7% of the sample is HIV positive.
- Study participants reported early onset of injecting drug use (mean age 18), high levels of current injecting frequency (mean 96 injections per month), and having shared injecting works (50%).
- 44% reported trading sex for drugs, money, clothing, shelter or other goods; 57% reported ever having sex with a main partner to get heroin injected; and 82% reported having unprotected sex with their main partner.

There was evidence supporting the Woman-Focused intervention with regard to reducing unprotected sex acts and always using clean works. Overall, harm reduction was successful for the Woman-Focused group. The study findings were presented at the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) Conference in June.

The Russian Women's CoOp study is funded under NIDA grant 2R01DA11609.

## OUR MOST RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Bobashev, G.V., Zule, W.A., Osilla, K.C., Kline, T.L., & Wechsberg, W.M. (2009). Transactional sex among men and women in the South at high risk for HIV and other STIs. *Journal of Urban Health*, 86(S1), 32–47.

Costenbader, E., Otiashvili, D., Meyer, W.J., Zule, W.A., Orr, W.A., & Kirtadze, I. (2009). Secrecy and risk among MSM in Tbilisi, Georgia. *AIDS Care*, 21(5), 591–597.

Kaufman, M.R. (2009). "It's just a fantasy for a couple of hours": Ethnography of a nude male show bar. *Deviant Behavior*, 30(5), 407–433.

Luseno, W.K., & Wechsberg, W.M. (2009). Correlates of HIV testing among South African women with high sexual and substance-use risk behaviours. *AIDS Care*, 21(2), 178–184.

Sawyer-Kurian, K.M., Wechsberg, W.M., & Luseno, W.K. (2009). Exploring the differences and similarities between Black/African and Coloured men regarding violence against women, substance abuse, and HIV risks in Cape Town, South Africa. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 10(1), 13–29.

Wechsberg, W.M. (2009). Adapting HIV interventions for women substance abusers in international settings: Lessons for the future. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 39, 237–243.

Wechsberg, W.M., Wu, L., Zule, W.A., Parry, C.D., Browne, F.A., Luseno, W.K., Kline, T.L., & Gentry, A.L. (2009). Substance abuse treatment needs and access among female sex workers and non-sex workers recruited in Pretoria, South Africa. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 4, 11.

Zule, W.A., & Bobashev, G.V. (2009). High dead-space syringes and the risk of HIV and HCV infection among injecting drug users. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 100(3), 204–213.

Zule, W.A., Bobashev, G.V., Wechsberg, W.M., Costenbader, E.C., & Coomes, C.M. (2009). Behaviorally bisexual men and their risk behaviors with men and women. *Journal of Urban Health*, 86(S1), 48–62.

Zule, W.A., Costenbader, E., Coomes, C.M., & Wechsberg, W.M. (2009). Effects of a hepatitis C virus educational intervention or a motivational intervention on alcohol use, injection drug use, and sexual risk behaviors among injection drug users. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(S1), S180–186.

***If you are interested in the publications from the listed studies, please contact the appropriate project director.***

## For more information on these programs, please contact:

### Field Coordinators

Rachel Middlesteadt Ellerson . . . . . 919-541-7255 | [rachelm@rti.org](mailto:rachelm@rti.org)  
Curt Coomes, JD . . . . . 919-990-8348 | [ccoomes@rti.org](mailto:ccoomes@rti.org)

### Project Directors

Wendee Wechsberg, PhD . . . . . 919-541-6422 | [wmw@rti.org](mailto:wmw@rti.org)  
Women's & South Africa CoOps  
William Zule, DrPH . . . . . 919-485-2797 | [zule@rti.org](mailto:zule@rti.org)  
Dead-Space Syringe Project,  
MASH, SATH-CAP, and Hep-C  
Michelle Kaufman, PhD . . . . . 919-541-7416 | [mkaufman@rti.org](mailto:mkaufman@rti.org)  
Healthy "Little" Lives Project  
Amy Hernandez, MA . . . . . 919-405-2810 | [ahernandez@rti.org](mailto:ahernandez@rti.org)  
Latinas' CoOp

## The Important Role of our Community Advisory Board

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) is made up of representatives from the community, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and professionals from Durham, Wake, Orange, and Mecklenburg Counties. CAB members provide input and valuable support to help make our work more effective. The CAB can help identify other resources and services for participants in the CoOp studies, and identify gaps or difficulties in the projects. This CAB has been in existence for more than 15 years. We are looking to expand our demographic area for recruitment. If you know of any interested community providers who would like to get involved and serve on our CAB, please contact Rachel Middlesteadt Ellerson at 919-541-7255 or [rachelm@rti.org](mailto:rachelm@rti.org).

### CAB Members

Dr. Craig C. Brookins . . . . . Director, Africana Studies, N.C. State University  
Dr. Reynolds (Tad) Clodfelter, Jr. . . . . Chief Executive Officer, SouthLight, Inc.  
Jacquelyn Clymore . . . . . Executive Director, Alliance of AIDS Services-Carolina  
Mike Gauss . . . . . Chair, Board of Trustees, St. John's Metropolitan Community Church  
James Goode . . . . . Community Member at Large (Wilson, NC)  
Trudy Harris-Adeeyo . . . . . Durham County Substance Abuse Supervisor  
Rev. Dumas A. Harshaw, Jr. . . . . Pastor, First Baptist Church of Raleigh  
Franklin Ingram . . . . . Community Member at Large  
Jeri Jeffreys . . . . . Director, SHAPE Program, Women's Center of Wake County  
Stella Kirkendale . . . . . CORE Community Program Manager, Family Health International  
Floyd Laisure . . . . . Executive Director, John Avery Boys and Girls Club  
Jacqueline S. Melvin . . . . . HIV Test Counselor, Lincoln Community Health Center  
Ann Milligan-Barnes . . . . . Nurse, Durham County Health Department  
Selena Monk . . . . . Durham County Health Department  
Jan Muller . . . . . Co-Chair, Triangle Community Works  
Rev. Michael D. Page . . . . . Pastor, Antioch Baptist Church  
Gudrun Parmer . . . . . Director, Criminal Justice Resource Center  
Sarah Rabideau . . . . . Haven House  
Starlene Scott-Robbins . . . . . Women's Coordinator Division of Mental Health,  
Developmental Disabilities & Substance Abuse Services  
Tonya Slaughter . . . . . Durham County Health Department  
Joyce Snipes . . . . . Baby Love, Lincoln Community Health Center  
Jean T. Sutter . . . . . Executive Director, Chrysalis Foundation for Mental Health  
Andie Thomas-Young . . . . . Vice President of Programs, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Triangle  
Yvonne Torres . . . . . HIV/STD Program Manager, Wake County Health Department  
Samuel Williams . . . . . Substance Abuse/Mental Health Counselor,  
W.E.B. DuBois Community Development Corporation

### Donations Please!

We are in need of donations for the North Carolina field sites, including baby clothing, young adult books, DVDs, children's toys, car seats, magazines, school supplies, toiletries, etc. Your donations are greatly appreciated and will be put to good use! Please contact Rachel Middlesteadt Ellerson at 919-541-7255 or [rachelm@rti.org](mailto:rachelm@rti.org) about ways you can donate. If you need help transporting items, please let us know at the time you call and we will arrange assistance.

## Community Updates

We would like to give a special thank you to the **Preparation for Independent Living Program (PILP)** in Raleigh for their support of our projects last fall. In April 2009, PILP relocated to 832 Wake Forest Road in Raleigh. Services offered at PILP include food; toiletry items; use of computers to look for jobs, apartments, etc.; case management; assistance with learning how to manage finances, be a better parent, get a job, finish school, or get an apartment; and financial assistance with rent for homeless adolescents.

PILP services are available to youths aged 16 to 21 who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

**Note:** The boxing program will continue to operate out of the gym located at 919 W. Morgan Street.



## To reach us in the community

**Wake County Field Site**  
Telephone: 919-838-0494  
507 East Martin Street  
Apartments E & F  
Raleigh, NC 27601

### Durham County Field Site

Telephone: 919-956-2854 or 919-682-3354  
Antioch Baptist Church  
1415 Holloway Street  
Durham, NC 27703

### Mecklenburg County

**MASH Contact Info—**  
Eligibility Screening:  
866-354-4989  
Project website:  
<http://www.mashstudy.com>

## Selected Upcoming Events

### Durham

#### FOX 50 Family Fest

August 22, 12:00–5:00 pm  
American Tobacco Campus  
318 Blackwell St., Durham

"Back to School" fun for the whole family. FREE admission.

#### "Second Chance" Restoring Lives Walk-a-Thon

October 10, 9:00 am  
Antioch Baptist Church

Antioch Builds Community will host its 3rd Annual "Second Chance" Restoring Lives Walk-a-Thon. This annual event supports a planned transitional housing reentry facility for ex-offenders seeking housing, employment, and supportive services. Organize and support a team for this community initiative so that we can make this dream become a reality. For more information, contact 919-688-8893 or [mdelanopage@aol.com](mailto:mdelanopage@aol.com).

### Raleigh

#### Higher Education in Raleigh: The Foundations of Legacy

Tuesday–Friday, 10:00 am–4:00 pm  
Saturday, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm  
Closed Sunday & Monday  
Raleigh City Museum  
220 Fayetteville St., Raleigh

This is a free event.

#### Nite Life Café for Teens

Every other Friday night  
7:00 pm–11:00 pm  
1280 Buck Jones Road

This event is free and there is a fully stocked snack bar where food and drinks can be purchased. This event is chaperoned. Smoking is not allowed on the premises and unruly behavior is not tolerated. For more information, please see <http://www.nitelifecafe.com/>

#### Let Us March On: Raleigh's Journey Toward Civil Rights

Ongoing daily during regular museum hours through December 31, 2009, except Sundays and Mondays; check with location for exceptions.

This free exhibit traces the conflicts, activism, and integration efforts of the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s. For more information call 919-832-3775 or visit <http://www.raleighcitymuseum.org>