

## LinCS 2 Durham News

Welcome to the first issue of our monthly LinCS 2 Durham email newsletter. We'll use the newsletter to keep LinCS 2 Durham collaborators and interested parties informed about our many activities and accomplishments. We'll also share items that aren't part of the project but pertinent to it, such as articles in the media, scientific papers that are highly relevant to our work, and local community events that are likely to interest you. Let us know what you think, including your ideas for making this e-newsletter even better.

Please get in touch with Kate Hilgenberg or Natalie Eley ([lincs2durham@fhi.org](mailto:lincs2durham@fhi.org)) to provide feedback on this newsletter or to submit material for future issues.



*Team members and community members get acquainted during an open house at Family Health International on May 13. Bishop Clarence Laney Jr., pastor of Monument of Faith Church, and Allison Mathews, UNC-CH research assistant with LinCS 2 Durham, speak with Dr. Kia Lilly Caldwell, UNC-CH project ethnographer.*

Photo by Lisa Marie Albert

### About LinCS 2 Durham

Scientists are researching ways to prevent AIDS, such as a vaccine or a gel that might be effective against HIV — the virus that causes the disease. To do a good

job, they need to work closely with people and communities who are concerned about the problem.

LinCS 2 Durham is reaching out to members of Durham's Black community and scientists in the region to learn and work together to shape the future of local HIV prevention research. We believe community members and scientists should make decisions jointly about what research needs to be done to prevent the spread of HIV in Durham.

LinCS 2 Durham is a five-year research project undertaken by Family Health International (FHI), North Carolina Central University (NCCU), the Durham County Health Department (DCHD), and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). The National Institute of Nursing Research, part of the National Institutes of Health, is providing the funding.

## **LinCS 2 Durham gets going**

To prevent the spread of HIV, scientists and communities must come together to make prevention more effective. This spring LinCS 2 Durham began to do just that.

Training of field staff for the project took place May 13-22 at FHI and on the campus of NCCU.

The training began with an introductory session at FHI's headquarters in Durham, followed by an open house. Many community members attended, including Dr. Howard Fitts, former chair of public health education at NCCU and one of Durham's earliest advocates for de-stigmatizing HIV.

For the next seven days, field staff met at the Miller-Morgan Health Sciences building on NCCU's campus. Participants discussed the aims of LinCS 2 Durham – for example, figuring out what new HIV prevention technologies are likely to be most effective in Durham's Black communities and how best to put them to use. They also talked about HIV-related projects already in place at NCCU, including Project SAFE (a peer education program to protect students from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections) and Project STYLE (a program to provide young men of color who are HIV-positive with housing and other services). Field staff also took a research-ethics training course.

"The training brought all the different components of the project together," says Alexandria Horne, a research assistant from NCCU.

"We want to talk to people in the Durham community about medical research and HIV," explains Dr. LaHoma Smith Romocki, a professor in NCCU's Department of Health Behavior. "Our goal is to help build support for new HIV-prevention work in the African American community, and especially among people who have the highest chance of becoming infected. We want to understand concerns people have about HIV, medical care, and medical research, and work with them to address those concerns."

## **Profile**



Allison Mathews is working with LinCS 2 Durham as a research assistant. She's helping to identify and get in touch with people in Durham's Black communities who are concerned about the spread of HIV, especially among young people, and who want to do something about it. Allison is also working to identify the neighborhoods in Durham that have been hit hardest by HIV/AIDS.

Allison is a doctoral student at UNC – Chapel Hill. She's writing her master's thesis on Black masculinity and the social and cultural adjustments that Black men with HIV/AIDS make to cope with their illness.

Allison is excited to be a part of the LinCS 2 Durham Project. She appreciates the project's special emphasis on community inclusion in all aspects of research. She's also happy to be involved in research that's dynamic and interdisciplinary.

She enjoyed the project's open house at Family Health International's headquarters on May 13. "That gathering was a great way for people in Durham – community members and organizational leaders – to start talking to one another and to scientists about the concerns they share," she says.

## LinCS 2 Durham on tour



*On May 22 the field staff of LinCS 2 Durham toured the city, visiting Walltown, Few Gardens, the West End, the Holloway Street area, the Bottom, and Eagle Village. One stop along the way, shown here, was Hayti Heritage Center. The tour concluded with lunch at Grandma and Me Restaurant.*

Photo by Lisa Marie Albert

## **Let's talk!**

To join the conversation about ways to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Durham's Black communities, get in touch with us. Please contact Natalie Eley, study coordinator, to request information about the LinCS 2 Durham Project.

Natalie Eley

Study coordinator

Email: [lincs2durham@fhi.org](mailto:lincs2durham@fhi.org)

Or [lincs2durham@nccu.edu](mailto:lincs2durham@nccu.edu)

Tel: (919) 544-7040 ext 11239

**If you come across any items that you want to share with LinCS 2 Durham collaborators (e.g., pertinent media coverage, scientific papers that are relevant to our work, and local community events that might be of interest), please forward them to Kate Hilgenberg ([lincs2durham@fhi.org](mailto:lincs2durham@fhi.org)).**

### **LinCS 2 Durham HIV Prevention**

**Kathleen M. MacQueen, PhD MPH, Principal Investigator (FHI)**

**LaHoma Smith Romocki, PhD, Co-Investigator (NCCU)**

**Ronald Strauss, PhD DDS, Co-Investigator (UNC-CH)**

**David Jolly, PhD, Investigator (NCCU)**

**Kia Lilly Caldwell, PhD, Investigator (UNC-CH)**