



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

October 2025

OUR EVENTS

HEALTHY UNIVERSITY

HIV, ADIPOSE TISSUE, AND
LONG-TERM HEALTH

HIV HISTORY

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENROLL
INTO RESEARCH STUDIES



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HEALTHY UNIVERSITY



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UPCOMING EVENTS



Empowering Change: The Role of Collaboration in Combating HIV Policy Challenges

Presented by:

Cedric Pulliam, PhD

Health and Public Sector Management Consulting
Accenture

Wednesday, October 8th, 2025 | 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM CST

CFAR-Wide Seminar Series presented by Tennessee CFAR



Ballroom: A Liberation Theology, A Public Health Innovation, A Global Spiritual Formation

Michael A. Roberson, MDIV, STM

Adjunct Professor
The New School University-Eugene Lang College



Sponsored in part by:



Thursday, October 16th, 2025 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm CST

**Inter-CFAR Faith & Spirituality Research Collaborative
Monthly Working Group Meeting**



HEALTHY UNIVERSITY

Nashville CARES' Peer Program is Healthy University, affectionately known as HealthyU. HealthyU encompasses all of Nashville CARES' education programs and psychosocial groups designed especially for people living with HIV. Built on the Constructivist Theory of Learning, where knowledge is constructed, built upon, and personalized for each client, HealthyU programming makes learning an active and personal process. HealthyU programs address four pillars of wellness: education (life-long learning); development of healthy life skills; creation of healthy bonds with others; self-advocacy and community advocacy.

Over the years, HealthyU has successfully expanded its programs and reach. What began as one to two groups has now expanded to more than ten weekly and monthly groups, as well as a twice-monthly drive-thru pantry. HealthyU staff engage with clients virtually and in-person with peer-to-peer and empowerment groups. The virtual groups help to engage clients across the 16 rural counties where Nashville CARES serves. Virtual programs remove barriers to participation

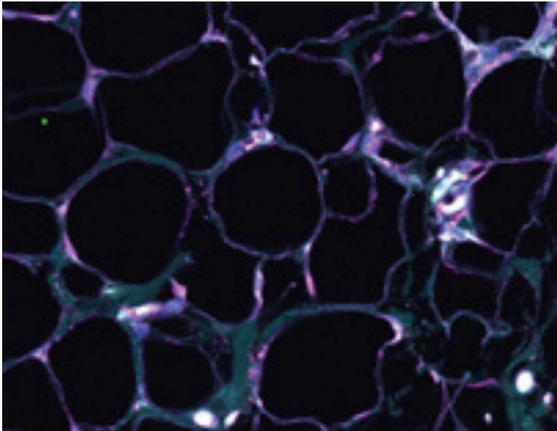
by overcoming transportation challenges and reducing social isolation, creating a sense of community and connection while also offering flexible scheduling and access to global facilitators through our HIPAA-compliant platform.

HealthyU has engaged our clients in research through its Peers in Research (PsIR) group, which functions as 'community researchers' and utilizes participants' lived experiences to assist other researchers in developing and designing research tools, data collection, and analysis. PsIR participants are trained in the meaning and method of community-engaged research by Jarissa Greenard, M.A. Ed., a community Educator from the Vanderbilt HIV Vaccine Program. Since the training, the PsIR has participated in focus groups with Julie Barroso, PhD, RN, ANP, FNAP, FAAN and Julia Eleanor Blair Chenault Professor of Nursing, School of Nursing at Vanderbilt University and most recently, provided opinions on Interview Guides with Dr. April Petit on a study with Amna Osman, CEO of Nashville CARES.

HealthyU PsIR participants are empowered to become Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to the community, enabling research that can inform the development of effective interventions. Although numerous research projects are underway, it is essential to involve people living with HIV and AIDS at every step of the process; otherwise, the outcomes may not be significant or effectively utilized.

To learn more about HealthyU programming, please [click here](#).

HIV, ADIPOSE TISSUE, AND LONG-TERM HEALTH



Close-up image of adipose tissue (fat)

Even with successful HIV treatment, many people living with HIV experience a build-up of extra adipose tissue (“fat” tissue) in the liver, heart, and muscles, which can increase the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and other conditions.

Research into healthy aging with HIV has emerged as a major community priority and a significant focus of the

Tennessee CFAR. A recent study at the Vanderbilt Comprehensive Care Clinic, developed in collaboration with members of the community and organized by Dr. John Koethe and Dr. Celestine Wanjalla of the CFAR, looked at how changes in “subcutaneous” adipose tissue under the skin, which serves as the body’s storage system for energy, may affect long-term health in people living with HIV.

Over 130 people living with HIV participated in the study and donated small amounts of adipose tissue and blood samples. Using advanced techniques to investigate cells at the individual level, the study found that adipose tissue in people with HIV contains more active immune cells, and these cells show signs of stress and inflammation. This inflammation reduces the body’s ability to store

energy in its usual places, leading to an energy “overflow” and a build-up of adipose tissue in the liver, heart, and other areas. Encouragingly, the project identified several potential ways to reverse these changes, which have already led to studies of new therapies. Community involvement at all stages of this work, from determining goals to designing the study to encouraging participants to join, was critical to move science forward in ways that can improve the health of people with HIV over the decades to come.

To learn more about this study, [click here](#)

HIV HISTORY 1982

In 1982, major steps were taken in recognizing and responding to the emerging AIDS crisis. Gay Men's Health Crisis was founded in New York, providing counseling and support, while activists and doctors in San Francisco formed the Kaposi's Sarcoma Research and Education Foundation (later the San Francisco AIDS Foundation). The media began covering the epidemic, with the New York Times first mentioning "GRID" and the Los Angeles Times running the first front-page story. CDC reports linked the illness to possible sexual transmission and later expanded the risk groups to include people with hemophilia. By September, the CDC officially named the disease AIDS and issued its first case definition. Efforts for federal funding began but stalled, while precautionary guidelines were introduced for healthcare workers. By year's end, reports showed possible transfusion-related AIDS and cases in infants, highlighting the broader scope of the epidemic.

To learn more about HIV History, [click here](#)

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENROLL INTO RESEARCH STUDIES

Tennessee CFAR investigators lead studies to improve the lives of people living with HIV, to protect people from acquiring HIV, and other important issues.

The following pages describe participation opportunities:

Studies now enrolling:

- For people who regularly drink alcohol and are living with HIV | **Page 10**
- Join the Fight: Advancing HIV Prevention Through Vaccine Research | **Page 11**
- A study of long-acting PrEP to prevent HIV in men | **Page 12**

Studies typically provide compensation to participants.

If you know of studies that we missed, please let us know at: tn-cfar@vumc.org



**META
HIV CVD**

IF YOU HAVE HIV, THIS STUDY MAY BE FOR YOU!

MICROBIOME, METABOLITES, AND ALCOHOL IN HIV TO REDUCE CVD



We're looking for adults ages 18 and older who drink alcohol regularly, are HIV+, and take antiretroviral therapy. We want to see whether taking a supplement called a probiotic can help with some of the gut-related health problems related to alcohol use and HIV.

Take our survey to see if you are eligible!

<https://redcap.link/METAPreScreen>



Participants will be asked to:

- Come to 5 study visits at Vanderbilt over 1 year
- Complete study phone calls about once a month
- Have their blood drawn
- Provide stool samples

Date of IRB Approval: 04/26/2023

Total compensation for completing the study is \$675

Institutional Review Board



Join the Fight: Advancing HIV Prevention Through Vaccine Research

In the United States HIV disproportionately affects certain groups and populations; however, HIV can affect anyone. Worldwide there are currently over 40 million people living with HIV. That number is growing.

The Vanderbilt HIV Vaccine Program is looking for healthy adults (ages 18-55) from all walks of life who are not living with HIV to participate in an HIV prevention study.

You cannot get HIV from participating in the study.

Volunteers must be available locally for approximately 12 months. Volunteers will be compensated. You can help fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic

Call 615-936-7327 or email vic.sorrell@vumc.org for more information.

In order to develop HIV prevention methods that will work for everyone, we need help from everyone!

ALL RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT OUR PROGRAM.

EXPRESSIVE

Together we can help advance HIV prevention research



Learn about the EXPRESSIVE clinical research study for people who could be exposed to HIV

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) medications may help people at risk of being exposed to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and lower their chance of becoming infected.

This study is comparing an investigational study medicine to an approved PrEP medicine to assess safety, how the investigational study medicine functions in the body, and any side effects (tolerability).

You may qualify to take part in this study if you are at least 16 years of age and:

- Do not have HIV
- Are a cisgender man (assigned male at birth and identify as male), transgender woman (assigned male at birth and identify as female), transgender man (assigned female at birth and identify as male), or gender nonbinary (assigned any gender at birth and do not identify as exclusively male or female)
- Have had receptive anal sex without a condom in the past year (not counting sex in a committed relationship) and **have at least 1** of these situations:
 - Had receptive anal sex with 2 or more partners in the last 3 months, no matter if you used a condom or not.
 - Had rectal or urethral infections like gonorrhea, chlamydia, or syphilis in the last 6 months.
 - Used any stimulant drugs while having sex in the last 3 months.

There are additional eligibility criteria, which the study team can discuss with you.

To learn more, including the possible risks and benefits of participation, please contact:

Call: 615-327-6353

Email: gstanton@mmc.edu

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