



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

March 2026



Latrice C. Pichon, PhD, MPH, CHES



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INTRODUCING: **LATRICE C. PICHON, PHD, MPH, CHES**

Latrice C. Pichon, PhD, MPH, CHES is a professor at the University of Memphis, School of Public Health in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Pichon's research expertise includes the application of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approaches to respond to HIV outreach and prevention efforts in Memphis, TN. Andrea Williams Stubbs, PhD is the Administrative Director for the HPV Cancer Prevention Program at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Both Drs. Pichon and Stubbs have a longstanding history of working within the Memphis HIV community and promoting HIV prevention efforts across the Mid-South.

Dr. Pichon and Dr. Stubbs first connected in 2010 when Dr. Pichon came to Memphis for her campus interview for a tenure track position at the University of Memphis, School of Public Health. At that time, Dr. Stubbs served as the Outreach Manager for Connect to Protect (C2P) Memphis, a community-based HIV prevention initiative focused on reducing risk among youth. Immediately upon meeting, a working relationship commenced and the two formed a budding friendship as they both shared a passion for addressing racial disparities.

Dr. Stubbs understood the importance of community involvement and partnership within the Memphis area, so when Drs. Pichon and Stubbs began working together, Dr. Stubbs welcomed the opportunity to expand existing clinical research initiatives within the Connect to Protect (C2P) coalition—widely recognized as the first community-based HIV prevention research initiative of its

kind—to intentionally incorporate community-driven approaches. The collaboration was a natural fit, as Dr. Pichon’s postdoctoral specialization in community-based participatory research (CBPR) aligned seamlessly with C2P’s pioneering model. In 2010, C2P had faith leaders actively engaged in coalition work, and the community had already identified the importance of increasing HIV awareness in faith-based settings. However, very little research had been conducted to understand the integration of HIV prevention and awareness efforts and faith-based organizations in the Mid-South. Subsequently, when seed funding became available through the University of Memphis and the UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS), Dr. Pichon brought the idea to Dr. Stubbs to have C2P apply for funding to measure the faith community’s readiness to expand their HIV prevention activities to include engaging in the research process. The C2P team and Dr. Pichon conducted formative research and partnered with Restoring Lives Through Christ (led by Ms. Nicole Becton), African American Pastor’s Consortium (AAPC; led by Ms. Carole Dickens, RN). Leveraging this partnership, C2P and AAPC had the opportunity to speak at Church Health Center’s Congregational Health Promoter program, then later assisted with the evaluation of Project Ephraim (led by Ms. Sheridan Smotherman).

Despite meaningful progress in bridging Memphis’s faith and HIV communities, engagement among youth and emerging adults—particularly those most impacted—remained limited. To address this gap, Memphis Headliners was launched with support from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities as an innovative, community-driven initiative designed to reach under-engaged minority populations through nontraditional venues and its signature “Party with a Purpose” model. NIMHD funding supported both the creation of Memphis Headliners and the expansion of targeted HIV prevention strategies, including increased testing, strengthened linkage to and retention in care, and expanded PrEP access.

Under the leadership of Eddie Wiley, MPH—and later DeMarcus Jones and Daniel Thompson—Memphis Headliners evolved in response to member feedback. Participants, known as “Headliners,” expressed a desire to move beyond single-issue programming and instead focus on the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. This insight directly informed the development of Whole YOUniversity in 2019, a training-based educational program for youth and young adults centered on the social determinants of HIV. Subsequent sessions further identified mindfulness, internalized HIV stigma, and discrimination as critical areas requiring deeper research and responsive, community-informed interventions.

In response to the needs found in Whole YOUiversity, an ad hoc steering committee known as the Trio+ was formed to guide the development of the Snap Out Stigma (SOS) Photovoice Project. The SOS project was funded in 2018 by Gilead Sciences COMPASS Initiative to explore internalized stigma experienced by People Living with HIV (PLWH) in the Memphis area. The project resulted in 35 photovoice narratives [available on our project website: www.snapoutstigma.com]



that were made into storyboards detailing areas, spaces, objects, and people that represent how PLWH feel and see stigma in their daily lives as a result of their HIV diagnosis. Beginning in 2021, these photovoice boards were displayed at community exhibits, allowing for on-demand HIV education, as well as space for event attendees to ask questions, provide commentary on the displays, and offer suggestions to the SOS team of facilitators for supplemental locations to showcase the exhibit in and around Memphis. Facilitators of these exhibits would answer one-on-one questions while also providing local HIV testing and prevention resources. Since 2021, the SOS team has received numerous invitations over the years, and we continue disseminating findings. However, work in this area was far from over. These exhibit interactions made it clear that there was a significant lack of education in the Memphis area on HIV-related stigma.

The SOS project provided the impetus to apply for, and be awarded, R13 funding from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, to host a virtual faith summit during the COVID-19 pandemic and respond to the growing number of infections in the Memphis and Mid-South area. The Fight Stigma with Faith Conference series resulted in two virtual meetings hosted in observance of National HIV Days, culminating in a Faith Summit on National Black HIV Awareness Day. The final conference provided didactic sessions with dynamic local, regional, and national speakers who have been engaged in HIV research and are recognized internationally for their work on determinants of HIV and faith-based interventions. A faith resource guide for congregations was created and distributed at the end. The project's ultimate goal was to connect HIV

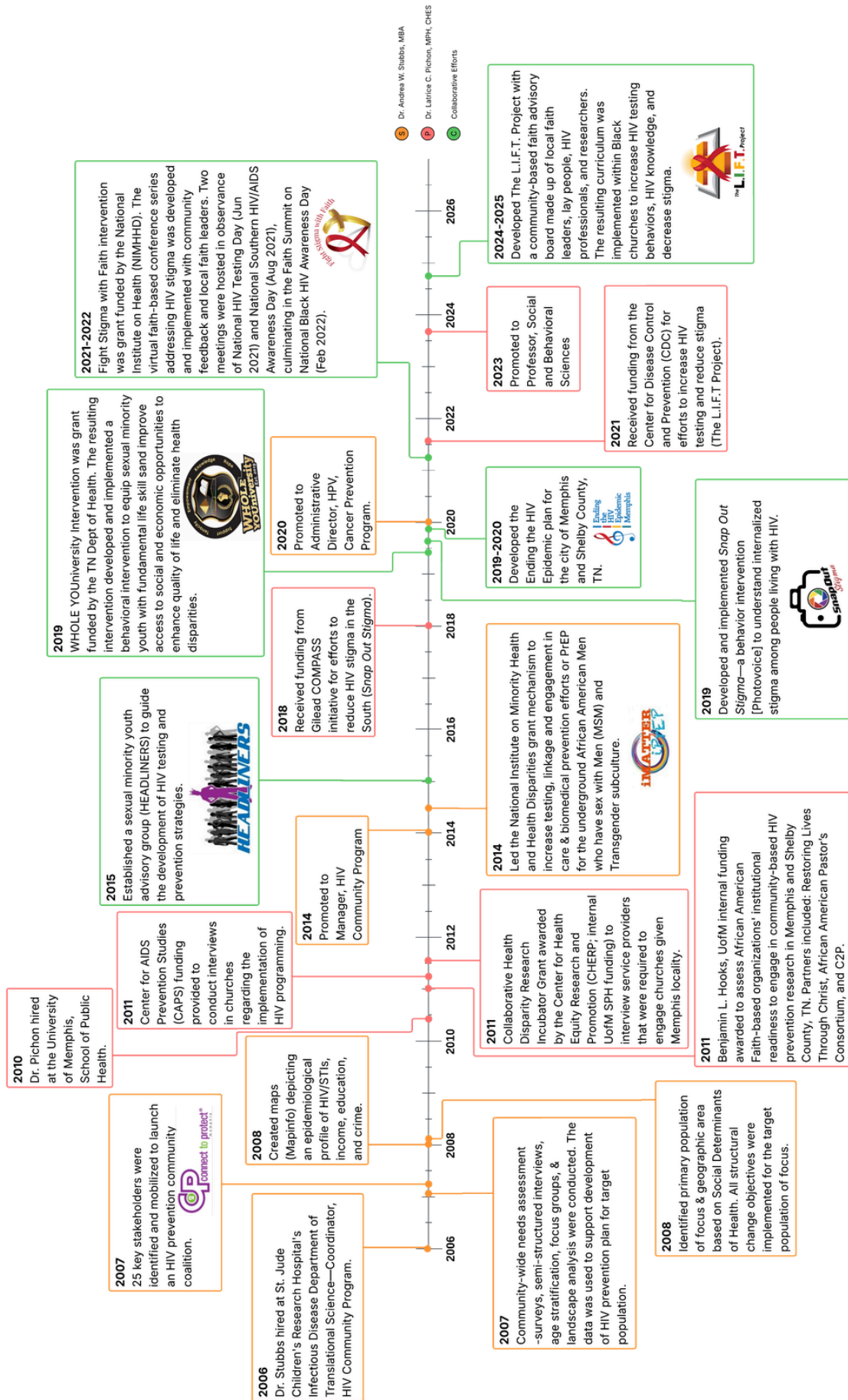


researchers with faith leaders and create more structured approaches to fight HIV stigma with faith-based strategies.

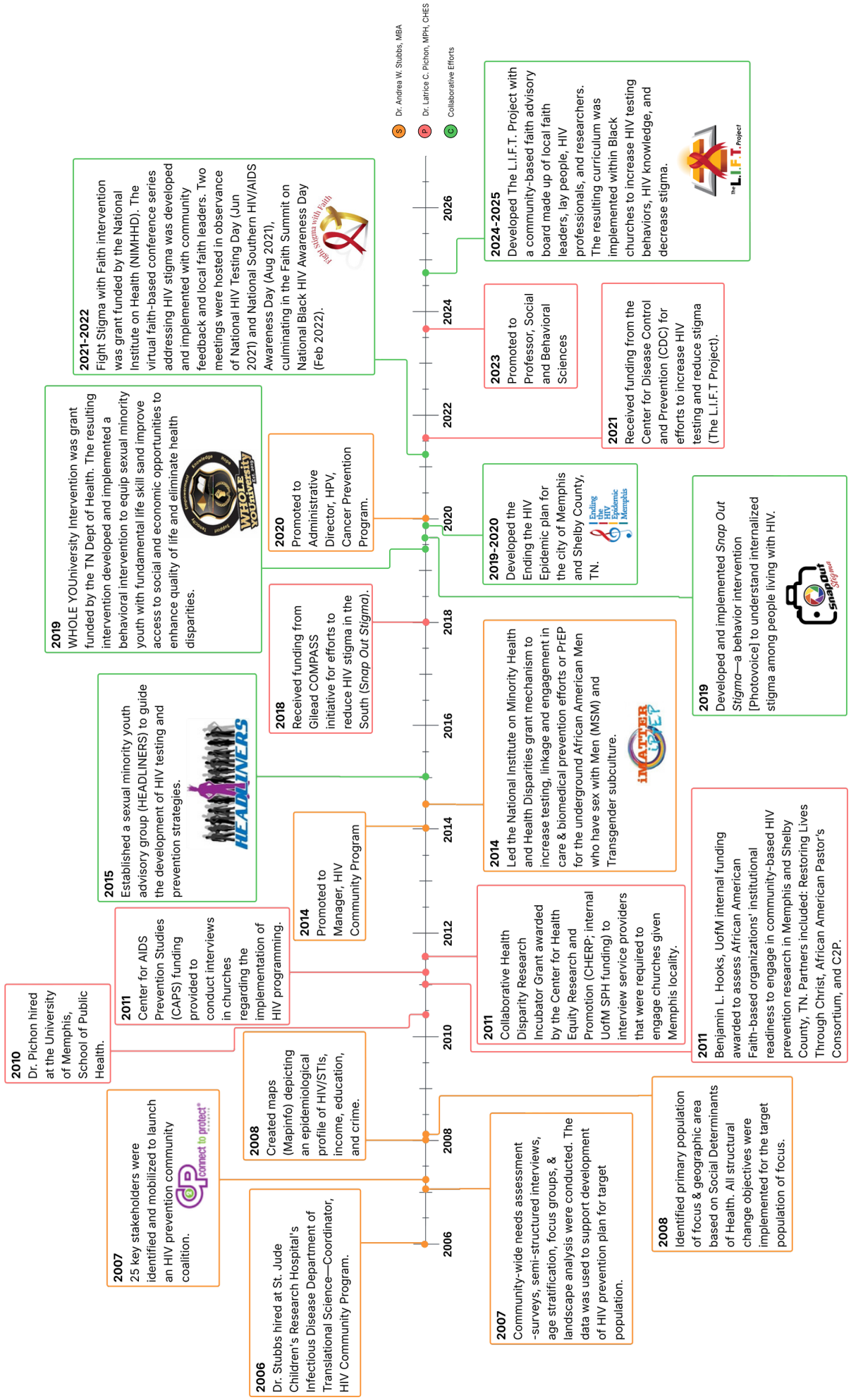
Drs. Pichon and Stubbs had made significant headway with the Memphis faith community and knew from feedback in each of these projects that education was amongst the greatest prevention efforts needed in the Memphis area at this time.

They used all the formative work and body of research collected over the previous 15 years to create and implement the L.I.F.T. Project (Leading by Igniting Faith and education to Tackle stigma). With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and three years of comprehensive work, the Faith Advisory Board—comprised of 20+ local faith leaders, PLWH, public health professionals, medical health professionals, researchers, and community members— designed a faith-based HIV curriculum intervention. The curriculum was implemented in seven churches across the Mid-South over a seven-month period. The curriculum was comprised of scientifically accurate information, scripture, and SOS excerpts. Overwhelmingly, the L.I.F.T. Project received favorable reviews with how well it integrated prayer, scripture, and science-based data to educate congregations on HIV stigma, prevention, testing, and the advancement of treatment options. Perhaps most important is that this comprehensive curriculum utilizes the lived experiences of PLWH and the narratives from SOS to tackle stigma from a person-centered approach. If you are interested in learning more about the L.I.F.T. Project and how your church can participate, please contact us at: liftproject@memphis.edu.

In summary, the work completed by Dr. Pichon and Dr. Stubbs has taken time, investment, perseverance, and a true love for the Memphis community. Dr. Pichon reflects on her longstanding partnerships and writes, “Sustaining a long-term partnership with C2P, Headliners, and the University of Memphis has been the easiest part mostly due to the dedication from Dr. Andrea Stubbs, Daniel Thompson, DeMarcus Jones, and Eddie Wiley. But the reality is that we have all had career changes, competing professional responsibilities, and, in some cases, a physical move. Despite these changes, our commitment to this work never stops—we keep pushing to make room for the next generation of HIV researchers and Memphis community members that will eliminate HIV and the resulting stigma.”



● Dr. Andrea W. Stubbs, MBA
● Dr. Latriece C. Pichon, MPH, CHES
● Collaborative Efforts



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● Dr. Latrice C. Pichon, MPH, CHES
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TENNESSEE CFAR **EVENTS**

CFAR-Wide Seminar Series hosted by Tennessee CFAR

Interim Findings from the Innovative Administration of Long-Acting Injectables for HIV Treatment Enhancement at Home (INVITE-HOME) Study



Scan to Register

March 11th, 2026 | 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm CST



Beth Bourdeau, PhD



Parya Saberi, PharmD, MAS, MFA, AAHIVP



Greg Rebchook, PhD



tn-cfar.org/events

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Faithful and Forgotten: The Impact of Faith-based Rejection on the Health of Gay Black Men

Thursday, March 19th, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm CST



Dontá Morrison, PhD

Author - Educator - Social Entrepreneur

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 249 764 264 720

Passcode: Sr2Bp9TH



Dial in by phone

[+1 615-601-3460](tel:+16156013460), [942701068#](tel:+1942701068) United States, Nashville

Phone conference ID: 942 701 068#



Sponsored in part by:





HIV Advocacy Day on the Hill Registration is Open!

Join advocates from across the state as we gather for our annual HIV Advocacy Day on the Hill.

This year's one-day event will be held on **Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at the Doubletree by Hilton Downtown Nashville**. Check-in begins at 10:30 am, followed by brunch and an advocacy update. Help us celebrate and honor an Advocate of the Year and prepare to make our voices heard!

Logistical information will be sent the week before the event.

See you on the Hill!!

[Register](#)

EXTERNAL EVENTS

NASHVILLE PRIDE PRESENTS

MARTINIS & JAZZ
Casino Night
An Evening Full of Chance and Mystery

APRIL 15TH, 6-9 PM
CENTER 615 615 MAIN STREET

SILENT AUCTION
WINE AND
PULL MORE!

FOOD & DRINK | GIVEAWAYS | PRIZE FOR BEST DRESSED

[Get your tickets here](#)

EXTERNAL EVENTS



SAVE THE DATE

**SATURDAY
JUNE 27, 2026**

**BICENTENNIAL
CAPITOL MALL
STATE PARK**

RECENT FINDINGS & DISCOVERIES

Our CFAR researchers are all kinds of HIV experts like physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, epidemiologists, mathematicians, community members, and scientists. We study a range of HIV topics spanning all the way from how cells and the virus work to how communities can improve their support for people living with HIV.



IMPORTANT and THANK YOU!

Our work isn't possible without our volunteers: People living with HIV throughout Tennessee. THANK YOU to our research participants and community advisors. We appreciate you.

A Step Toward Earlier Detection of HPV-Related Throat Cancer in People Living With HIV

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a relatively common virus that can be spread from person to person during sexual activity. There are more than 100 types of HPV; many are harmless, a few can cause skin growth called warts, and a few can even cause cancer in different areas, including the throat. Detecting HPV-related throat cancer early has been a difficult challenge for care providers, as it often doesn't become visible or apparent until the cancer is more advanced. One potential early marker of cancer is a blood antibody called HPV16 E6, which can appear years before cancer develops. People living with HIV are at higher risk for this cancer, but few studies have looked at whether measuring these antibodies can help identify it earlier.

What Researchers Did

A team that included researchers from the Tennessee CFAR Center for AIDS Research analyzed blood samples from 2,331 men living with HIV who were over age 40 in Tennessee between 2001 and 2019. The researchers measured the levels of several HPV16

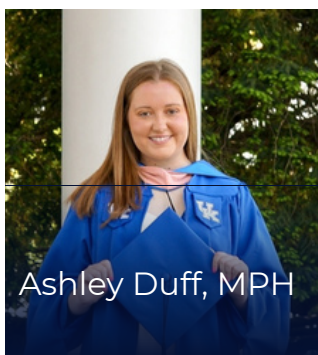
antibodies to determine how strongly they were associated with the development of throat cancer.

Key Findings

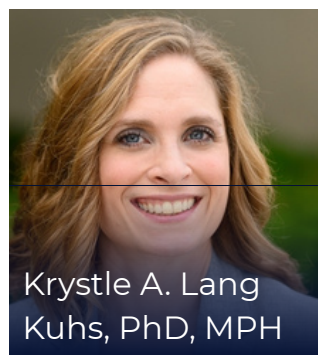
- The study found 135 men had HPV16 E6 antibodies; 11 men had HPV-related throat cancer.
- Having HPV16 E6 antibodies was linked to a 14-times higher chance of having HPV-related throat cancer.
- 45% of the men with cancer had these antibodies, compared to only 6% of men without cancer.
- Other HPV16 antibodies (E1, E2, E7) also showed significant associations with HPV-related throat cancer.
- HPV16 E6 antibodies were detectable up to 9 years before the cancer diagnosis, indicating these antibodies could be an important early warning sign.

Why It Matters

The presence of HPV16 E6 antibodies in the blood was strongly linked to HPV-related throat cancer in men living with HIV. At present, it is difficult to identify HPV-related throat cancer in the early stages, when it can be easier and safer to treat. While using HPV16 E6 antibodies in clinical practice is not routine, this study shows promise for using these antibodies as an early warning sign for HPV-related throat cancer. More research is needed to determine how best to use these findings to improve early throat cancer detection and outcomes for people living with HIV.



Ashley Duff, MPH



Krystle A. Lang Kuhs, PhD, MPH

[Click here to learn more](#)

HIV HISTORY 1985

In this consequential year of the AIDS epidemic, scientific progress, shifting policies, and rising public awareness reshape the national conversation. The CDC recognizes the newly identified virus as the cause of AIDS and issues blood-screening guidance, soon followed by the FDA's approval of the first HIV test. Global urgency becomes clear when health leaders gather for the first International AIDS Conference.

Public attitudes and government action evolve unevenly. Actor Rock Hudson's announcement—and later his death—dramatically increases visibility, while Ryan White's exclusion from school highlights growing stigma and the need for education. Cities move to regulate bathhouses, sparking debates over public health and civil liberties.

Cultural voices respond powerfully through landmark plays like *The Normal Heart* and *As Is*, giving expression to grief, activism, and community conflict. Meanwhile, President Reagan publicly addresses AIDS for the first time as Congress expands research funding. By year's end, the United Nations reports HIV cases in every region of the world, underscoring the epidemic's accelerating global reach.

[Click here to learn more](#)

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENROLL INTO RESEARCH STUDIES

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

Studies are looking for:

- people living with HIV and depression, to study treatment
- people living with or without HIV, to study gum disease
- Black or multiracial women who are sexually active
- people living with HIV who regularly drink alcohol
- people without HIV, to find a vaccine against HIV
- men without HIV, to study long-acting PrEP to prevent HIV

Studies typically provide compensation to participants.

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



Do you find it hard to enjoy the things you used to love?

If you are living with HIV and are experiencing depression, you may qualify for a new study.

A research team at Vanderbilt is doing a study to find a better way to treat depression in people living with HIV. The study will compare two different medications. Half of the people who sign up will take a medication that's already commonly used for depression. The other half will take a medication that is used to treat a different condition but that may help with depression in people living with HIV. Our researchers want to learn if the medications improve symptoms of depression without having too many side effects.

Total Compensation for completing this trial is \$775



Ready to get started?

Scan the QR CODE to see if you are eligible

Approved by Meharry IRB
Expires on 10/13/2026

MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Volunteers needed for research project:

Effect of dental care treatment on gum disease with and without HIV

The purpose of the study is to determine the best way to remove bad bacteria from the mouth and provide better dental treatment

Who Is Eligible To Participate?

-Adults that are not pregnant, with or without gum disease

Participants will receive \$50 for each visit

(5 visits): total \$250

Interested?
Scan QR Code

Complete short survey,
and the research team will
contact you



If you have questions, please contact

India Menefield, BS
Ph: 615-327-6745
Email: india.menefield@mmc.edu

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Email: afkelly@mmc.edu

Dr. Ethel Harris, DDS, MPH, FACD
Ph: 615-327-5782
Email: eharris@mmc.edu

Are you a Black woman living in Middle Tennessee?

Researchers at Vanderbilt University Medical Center are exploring HIV prevention among Black women in Middle Tennessee. Participation includes one brief survey and a one-time interview at a time chosen by you.

We would love to hear from you if:

- You are aged 18 years and over
- You are a woman
- You are Black, including multi-racial
- You are or have been sexually active with a man in the past year

Participants are compensated with up to \$50 in e-gift cards for their time and contribution to better understanding preventing HIV in our community.

If you are interested in participating, scan the QR code below for more information!



Date of IRB Approval: 10/14/2025





**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.



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

Total compensation for
completing the entire
study is \$675

Take our survey to see if you are eligible!

<https://redcap.link/metastudy>

HIV VACCINE STUDIES, TO DISCOVER A VACCINE THAT PROTECTS PEOPLE FROM ACQUIRING HIV



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



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Thank you to **L. Lauren Brown**, PhD, LCSW, **Reighan Diehl**, MPH, **Latrice C. Pichon**, PhD, MPH, CHES, **Andrea Stubbs**, PhD, MPA and **Mary Morgan**, MPH for collaborating with us on this issue of the Tennessee CFAR Community newsletter. Your contributions and insights have enriched our content and helped us highlight the incredible work being done across our community. We are grateful for your support and dedication to advancing research and education.

Contact Us!

Website tn-cfar.org

Email tn-cfar@vumc.org

Social Media   

**Donate to the
Tennessee CFAR**

