

# Positively Palm Beach



Treasure Coast Health Council, Inc., 600 Sandtree Drive, Suite 101, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, 33403

## VGTI Florida, University of Montreal Researchers Uncover Approach for Possibly Eradicating HIV Infection

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*By Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute (VGTI)  
Florida*

*Press Release*

*June 22, 2009*

St Lucie, FL – Researchers from the newly-established VGTI Florida and the University of Montreal have uncovered a possible method for eradicating HIV infection in the human body. The researchers have also revealed new information which demonstrates how HIV persists in the body – even in patients receiving drug treatments – and how the virus continues to replicate itself in individuals undergoing treatment. The research findings will be published in the online version of the journal *Nature Medicine* on Sunday June 21 and will be featured in an upcoming print edition of the journal.

patients infected with AIDS can survive with the disease as long as they are treated with a complex series of antiretroviral drugs.

“Current medications allow us to control HIV and limit its progression in most cases,” explained Raflick-Pierre Sékaly, Ph.D, current scientific director for VGTI Florida, a former scientist at the University of Montreal, and senior author of the research paper. “However, the medications do not eradicate the disease. Instead, the disease persists within the body – much like water in a reservoir – and is never fully destroyed. We believe our latest research may help scientists and physicians overcome this hurdle.”

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Medical advancements in the past 20 years have significantly increased the survival rates of AIDS patients. In fact, approximately 90 percent of

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# HIV: The Evil Hunter

By Beverly Gardner

*Unleashed Voices Silence is Death*

## HIV Who are you?


Without invitation you showed up everywhere, from east to west, north to south and on all borders of the world. Your dress code and language we barely understood. You ram the globe like a furious beast untamed, wild and free. HIV!!!

Your stomach like a raven! You have a fling with anyone despite their creed, age or economic status. You do not discriminate- you kill! Our babies; mothers and fathers and our grannies too!

## HIV!

You dodged AZT the first bullet we threw at you. You spit your deadly venom and stopped it in its track.

Come and catch me if you can; you often jeered, as you scurry away laughing like hungry hyenas. And



**Ujima Men's Collective Conference 2009**  
Hilton Palm Beach Airport Hotel, West Palm Beach  
09/25/2009 - 09/27/2009

The goal of the conference is to provide a forum for black gay men to develop life skill strategies in a non-threatening environment to enhance their lives to better understand themselves and their community. For more information contact UDCRC, Inc. Attn: Ujima Men's Conference, E-mail: [ujimamen@aol.com](mailto:ujimamen@aol.com); (813) 391-6710; or access the Web site: [www.ujimamen.org](http://www.ujimamen.org).

you forced the big guys to run to the hills for help. You are an evil hunter, a coward I may say. You hide behind your mask and Teflon suite. No respect to the tribes you give.

But, despite your slippery ways we have gathered our best minds worldwide and threw a combination of arsenals at you, and with excitement we cheered at last. We had you trapped, we heard you kicking and screaming as you planned your next escape.

## HIV!

We have declared the mother of all wars against you. We have enforced our pathways with psychedelic ones, nucleoside, nucleotide, protease inhibitors, and entry inhibitors.

Good God!

We even try to reverse you too!


A tuff enemy you!!

A tuff enemy you are!!!

*Unleashed Voices: Silence is Death © 2009*

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*Photography by Ricc Rollins*



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**DISCLAIMER:** Positively Palm Beach is designed to present information to people living with HIV disease and their concerned family and friends. It is not to be regarded as medical advice. The appearance of information in this publication does not constitute an endorsement of that information by DOH or its sponsors. Consult your health care providers before undertaking any treatment discussed herein. Views expressed herein are those of the byline author and do not necessarily express the views of DOH or its staff. Requests by entities to insert materials will be reviewed by the editorial staff prior to acceptance.

## Survey: Most People with HIV Lack Mental Health Services

### PART II

*By David Evans*

*POZ*

*April 28, 2009*

The partnership between the APA, NAPWA, AIDSmeds and POZ, however, represents one of the first times a group representing mental health professionals has teamed up with groups led by people with HIV to make HIV-positive people such an integral part of exploring and defining their mental health needs.

People with HIV were recruited to complete the survey, maintained by POZ.com, through newsletters, e-mail blasts, blogs and website banner ads. Nearly two thirds of those who responded had an income of less than \$35,000 per year. About half were working full- or part-time; 34 percent were on disability; and 14 percent were unemployed. Forty percent had private health insurance; 6 percent had no health insurance; and the rest relied on Medicare, Medicaid or AIDS drug assistance programs.

“The magnitude of people who were reporting difficulties—that was heartbreaking,” said St. Lawrence, who crunched the numbers on the survey. She revealed 89 percent of the respondents said they had experienced some degree of depression since their diagnosis. Seventy-eight percent reported having felt anxious, afraid or consistently worried about the future, and 65 percent reported problems with thinking and memory. Sixty-seven percent said they’d had trouble coping with their HIV diagnosis.

St. Lawrence was also “alarmed” that 32 percent said they’d felt unsafe in their homes or relationships. “That’s very troubling,” she says.

Drug use was also fairly common among the people surveyed. Though most reported alcohol or marijuana use, 18 percent reported having used crystal meth, 10 percent had used crack, and 3.5 percent had used heroin. Nearly 7 percent had injected drugs. Thirty-one percent reported not having used drugs or alcohol since being diagnosed.

What moved St. Lawrence most, however, were the reports people gave of their struggles to find treatment for mental health and substance use problems. Six percent of people, she says, felt too embarrassed to tell their provider, and another 6 percent feared being judged. One respondent wrote about deciding not to tell a provider because the 15 minutes allotted with the provider “isn’t long enough for personal problems.” Another wrote, “No point bringing it up. I can’t afford to treat it.” A third wrote, “I was ashamed.”

Of the 1,500 people who were courageous enough to raise the issue with their health care provider, nearly 28 percent were not referred to a mental health specialist. Unfortunately, of those who saw a professional for their problems, 30 percent said they were not satisfied with the care they received. Of those who weren’t satisfied, many said their mental health care provider had no experience dealing with HIV or did not understand their situations. A substantial number of comments from survey respondents

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complained about the cost of mental health care being prohibitive; as one person wrote: “Poverty and loneliness can’t be treated with a pill.”

## **Moving Forward**

Anderson and St. Lawrence acknowledge the data from the survey are not as rigorous as those in a study choosing random sample of people who are representative of the overall population of people living with HIV in the United States. Also, the survey did not allow for people to answer the kind of screening questions most often used to formally diagnose clinical depression, anxiety and cognitive or substance use disorders. Anderson and St. Lawrence, however, are very interested in doing follow-up surveys, and they believe the completed survey is an excellent beginning.

Working closely with NAPWA, one of the nation's leading federal advocacy groups for people living with HIV/AIDS, and other organizations, APA hopes the survey will help yield important policy changes. “The survey is very helpful,” says Daniel Dawes, the senior legislative and federal affairs officer at APA’s Public Interest Government Relations Office, “not only for folks on the hill—especially the champions on HIV and AIDS—but also for the coalitions we work with, with different organizations, with different alliances we have. It sort of arms them with this knowledge and helps them realize, ‘Oh my gosh, this is what actually is coming out of our community.’”

Anderson wants policymakers to realize that resources for mental health and substance use

disorders are an absolute necessity, not just in terms of treating those disorders, but also in minimizing their impact on the physical health of people living with HIV. “To put energy or funding into [HIV prevention and primary care] without addressing the mental health issues is undercutting our ability to be successful in those endeavors,” Anderson says.

He would like to see additional resources for mental health and substance use services devoted to people living with HIV, but he also wants to improve training for primary care providers and mental health and substance use providers. The data from the survey clearly point to problems in both areas, with primary providers not offering referrals and mental health providers not being experienced in dealing with HIV, both of which are key. He says in addition to seeing providers deal with mood and substance use disorders, he’d like them to be aware that many HIV-positive individuals may have cognitive or “information processing” problems that need to be addressed. He notes people with serious mental illnesses, such as bipolar and psychotic disorders, have some of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the country.

“It is well past time for everyone to realize good health care for people with HIV/AIDS [requires] practical integration of primary care, mental health care and substance abuse treatment,” Anderson says. “Although many people have been calling for this type of integration for years, the investment of money, time and effort has not occurred on the scale required.” He hopes the completion of the survey will be a much-needed step in the right direction.

# Is Anyone Listening?

*Lorenzo Robertson*

*Palm Beach County HIV CARE Council Member*

*May 4, 2009*

Recently, the Honorable Maxine Waters, Congresswoman from California reintroduced the routine HIV screening Coverage Act (H.R. 822) in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. This bill would require health insurance plans to cover routine HIV tests under the same terms and conditions as other health screenings. This is an awesome plan to make HIV testing routine, however there is only one concern that plagues me with routine HIV testing, will they receive quality pre-test counseling?

The HIV pre-test counseling component of the HIV testing is critical to assisting people with developing risk reduction plans and to understand their risks for HIV infection. I have gone to doctors and in many instances tests are done. Nothing is explained about the test. So to make HIV testing routine is a little frightening to me. I am just very concerned that some of our people that have not been screened by HIV counselors may be in a situation that puts them at continuous risk for HIV infection.

Last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released more accurate information about the infection rates up 40% from the estimated 40,000 a year to 56,300. In addition, that information 21% of the people in

the United States infected with HIV/AIDS are unaware of their HIV/AIDS status. This is one of the positives to having routine testing to capture those that may not enter into an HIV/AIDS center to get tested.

Routine HIV testing will increase the number of people getting tested and knowing their HIV status; I just hope that they will receive excellent pre-test counseling to decrease their risks for HIV infections...is anyone listening?



## Survey: Most People with HIV Lack Mental Health Services

*PART I*

*By David Evans*

*POZ*

*April 28, 2009*

*The results are in on a groundbreaking survey detailing the mental health and substance use problems faced by people living with HIV. Confirming that both problems are all too common and frequently untreated, the survey is now being analyzed by the American Psychological Association for advocacy efforts to increase the availability of affordable mental health services for people with HIV. But first, we provide a glimpse at the data POZ and AIDSmeds readers and NAPWA members provided.*

The majority of people with HIV experience

**HOTLINES**

A.G. Holley State Hospital TB Hotline.....	1-800-482-4636
CDC Info Hotline.....	1-800-342-2437
Crisis Line (Center Line).....	211
Drug Abuse Hotline.....	662-4357
Florida HIV/AIDS Hotline.....	1-800-352-2437
Gay and Lesbian Hotline.....	1-888-843-4564
Medicare Hotline.....	1-800-638-6833
National Deaf AIDS Line.....	1-800-AIDS-TTY
Project Inform Treatment Hotline.....	1-800-822-7422
STD Hotline.....	1-800-227-8922

**EDUCATION/INFORMATION**

Accessible Life Saving Education for at Risk Teens (ALERT).....	966-4288
American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR).....	1-800-392-6327
CDC HIV/AIDS Treatment Information.....	1-800-448-0440
Children with AIDS Project of America.....	1-602-973-4319
Children's Case Management Org., Inc. ....	804-9441
Clinical Trials Information.....	1-800-Trials-A
Farmworker Coordinating Council of PBC.....	533-7227
Florida AIDS Action Council.....	1-800-779-4898
Glades Health Initiative, Ind. ....	996-0500
National Minority AIDS Council.....	1-202-483-6622
PBC Health Department.....	540-1300
PBC HIV CARE Council.....	844-4430
Red Cross, American.....	833-7711
Senior HIV Intervention Project (SHIP).....	586-4843
Treasure the Children/Charles' Crew Adolescent Speakers, Inc....	790-6291

**HIV/AIDS TESTING**

Be Encouraged in the Word Ministries.....	738-7888
Compass, Inc.*.....	533-9699
Comprehensive AIDS Program (CAP)	
Belle Glade*.....	996-7059
Delray Beach*.....	274-6400
Riviera Beach*.....	844-1266
West Palm Beach*.....	472-2466
Glades Health Initiative, Inc.*.....	996-0500
Drug Abuse Treatment Association (DATA).....	844-3556
Jesus People Proclaim Int'l Ministries.....	361-0610
PBC Health Department (sliding scale fee)	
C.L. Brumback Health Center.....	996-1600
Delray Beach Health Center.....	274-3105
Lantana Health Center.....	547-6805
Riviera Beach Health Center*.....	804-7909
West Palm Beach Health Center.....	514-5465
Redemptive Life Urban Initiatives.....	832-6077
Repairshop Outreach Ministries.....	502-3173
Riviera Beach Family Resource Center.....	840-1888
St. James Missionary Baptist.....	842-5971
United Deliverance Resource Center*.....	844-7071
Women of Color, Rise Above Your Shame.....	577-3612
Zanmi Lavi.....	752-6239

\*Rapid HIV Testing Available

**DENTAL CLINICS**

C.L. Brumback Health Center.....	996-1636
Delray Beach Health Center.....	274-3111
Riviera Beach Health Center.....	804-7900
West Palm Beach Health Center.....	514-5310

**PHARMACIES**

Department of Health	
Belle Glade.....	996-1637
Delray Beach.....	274-3107
Riviera Beach.....	804-7940
West Palm Beach.....	514-5380
Commcare Pharmacy.....	615-0564
BioScrip Specialty Pharmacy (Spanish speaking).....	683-0001

**HIV/AIDS SERVICE AGENCIES**

Comprehensive AIDS Program, Inc. (CAP)	
West Palm Beach.....	472-2466
Belle Glade.....	996-7059
Delray Beach.....	274-6400
Riviera Beach.....	844-1266
Pahokee.....	924-7773
Care Resource	
Coral Gables.....	1-305-667-9296
Fort Lauderdale.....	1-954-567-7141
Miami.....	1-305-573-5411
Compass.....	533-9699
Youth Line.....	533-9699
Children's Place at Home Safe, Inc.	
North/Central Palm Beach County.....	832-6185
Southern Palm Beach County.....	995-0490
Farmworkers Coordinating Council of PBC.....	533-7227
Florida Lighthouse.....	499-1442
Gratitude Guild, Inc. ....	833-6826
HIV Pastoral Care.....	1-305-858-4649
Hospice By the Sea.....	395-5031
Hospice of Palm Beach.....	848-5200
Integrated Healthcare Systems.....	586-7404
Latin American Immigrants & Refugee Org.....	966-4515
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County.....	655-8944
Minority Development and Empowerment, Inc.....	296-5722
Palm Beach County Home.....	842-6111
Palm Beach Research Center.....	689-0606
Planned Parenthood.....	848-6300
Oakwood Center.....	383-5912 or 383-5777
Social Security Administration.....	1-800-722-1213
Treasure Coast Health Council, Inc. ....	844-4220

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE PHYSICIANS**Central CountyRiviera Beach Health Center

Manochehr Khojasteh, MD.....	804-7900
Celeste Li, MD.....	804-7900
Kleper de Almeida, MD (Spanish Speaking).....	967-0101
Kenneth Ness, MD.....	655-8388
Olayemi O. Osiyemi, MD.....	832-6770
Donald Watren, MD.....	655-9660
Larry Bush, MD.....	967-0101

Northern County

<u>Infectious Disease Associates- Leslie Diaz, MD.....</u>	776-8300
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Southern County

<u>Infectious Disease Consultants.....</u>	499-1442
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Hamed A. Komaiha, MD, Jose C. Villalba, MD,	
Jaroslav F. Ondrusek, MD, Cesar A. Randich, MD, Melvin S. Kohan, MD	

Delray Beach Health Center

Snehprabha Samant, MD.....	274-3178
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<u>Guadalupe Medical Center (Spanish Speaking).....</u>	642-0768
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Infectious Disease Associates

Julio Cardenas, MD, Ines Mbagha, MD, Susan Saxe, MD, Jill Howard,	
MD, Sandra Cebular, MD, Kurt Weise, MD	
Delray.....	496-1095
Boca Raton.....	393-8224

Western County

Lyonel Jean Baptiste, MD.....	992-9216
Juan Carlos Rondon, MD.....	924-7788

**PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE**

VA Medical Center (for veterans only).....	422-7522
Palm Beach County Health Department	
Riviera Beach Health Center.....	804-7900
C.L. Brumback Health Center (Belle Glade).....	996-1600
Delray Beach Health Center.....	274-3100
West Palm Beach Health Center (pediatrics).....	514-5300

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