



The AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) Network is the largest HIV/AIDS clinical trials organization in the world. We currently have 34 domestic & 25 international sites.



## Understanding the Clinical Trial Enrollment Process: A Three Part Series

### **Part Three: Understanding the Trial Closing, Re-Enrollment and Study Participant Un-Blinding Process**

In March's newsletter, part one of Understanding the Clinical Trial Enrollment Process covered the informed consent and screening process as well as highlighted the importance of the relationship between ACTG Network researchers and clinicians and our study participants. In last month's newsletter, part two of the series provided an overview of the study entry and randomization process and how it relates to successful and long-term participation in ACTG Network trials. In the third and final installment of the series, we discuss the trial closing process, study re-enrollment and the un-blinding of study participants.

As a study nears its end point, it serves as a time for participants to reflect on the study and determine if they would like to consider enrolling in another ACTG Network clinical trial. Cheryl Keenan is a Research Nurse at our Brigham and Women's Hospital Clinical Research Site in Boston, MA and she estimates that about 70% of first-time study participants choose to continue to participate in ACTG Network trials. She attributes this to the solid relationships built between participants and researchers and clinicians while on study and notes that being part of the clinical trial process is a very rewarding

experience for many people living with HIV. [Read more>>](#)

To read Part One: Understanding the Informed Consent and Screening Process, [click here](#).

To read Part Two: Understanding the Study Entry and Randomization Process, [click here](#).

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## May is Hepatitis Awareness Month



### **Awareness Month Highlights Need for Increased Hepatitis Testing and Treatment for Individuals living with HIV**

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month and it serves as a reminder of the nearly 4.5 million Americans who are currently infected with hepatitis B virus (HBV) or hepatitis C virus (HCV). While viral hepatitis is treatable, it is typically asymptomatic and can linger undetected for years, causing severe damage to the liver. This issue is compounded in individuals living with HIV and can have significant impact on morbidity and mortality rates as well as quality of life. It is important that all individuals living with HIV are tested for viral hepatitis and, if found to be actively infected, to begin treatment as soon as possible. As part of the mission of the ACTG Network to reduce the burden of HIV and viral hepatitis, the main priority of the Hepatitis Translational Science Group (TSG) is to develop new and effective therapies for all those living with HIV and viral hepatitis co-infection. [Read more>>](#)

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## 2016 Annual ACTG Network Meeting Update

### **Mark Your Calendars: The 2016 Annual ACTG Network Meeting is June 24-28**

The 2016 Annual ACTG Network Meeting will be held Sunday, June 24 through Thursday, June 28 in Washington, DC at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. The meeting includes Principal Investigators, Site Investigators and Site Coordinators, Research Nurses, Laboratory Technologists, Pharmacists, Data Managers, Community Representatives, Specialty Laboratory Directors and representatives from the Leadership and Operations Center, Network Coordinating Center, Statistical and Data Management Center and DAIDS. For the most up-to-date 2016 Annual ACTG Network Meeting agenda, [click here](#).

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## ACTG Network Spotlight

### **Field Representative serves as "Site-ologist" Providing Insight and Guidance during Protocol Development**

*Meet Baiba Berzins*

Baiba Berzins, MPH, has been with the ACTG Network since 1990 serving as the Study Coordinator at our Northwestern University Clinical Research Site in Chicago, IL. In 1993, Baiba took on the newly created role of Field Representative in addition to her Study Coordinator duties. The creation of this role was in response to protocol development teams feeling as though they needed more insight from site personnel; they wanted someone on the team who could serve as an expert on the operations and limitations at sites. Since each protocol team consisted of a Virologist, Immunologist, Pharmacologist, etc., team members thought it would be extremely valuable for a Field Representative to serve as a "Site-ologist." [Read more>>](#)



Baiba Berzins

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## ACTG Network Site Investigator Selected by Government of Mexico for Ohtli Award



(L) Mexican Consulate General & (R) Dr. del Rio

### **Dr. Carlos del Rio Receives One of the Highest Awards Given by Government of Mexico**

On May, 5 at the headquarters of the Consulate General of Mexico in Atlanta, GA, Dr. Carlos del Rio was presented with the prestigious Ohtli Award. Dr. del Rio is an Investigator at our Emory University Clinical Research Site and was selected by the Government of Mexico to win the Ohtli Award because of his "distinguished work that benefits the interests of the Mexican community or communities of Mexican origin living in the United States." Ohtli is a Nahuatl word meaning "pathway," or camino in Spanish, and the annual award acknowledges and honors people who have dedicated most of their lives and career to "blazing a trail" abroad for younger generations of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans as they strive to achieve their dreams. To read more about the Ohtli Award and Dr. del Rio, [click here](#).

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## This Year in HIV/AIDS History: 2006

**June:** Marks 25 years since the first AIDS cases were reported.

**March:** First annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.

**May:** United Nations convenes a follow-up meeting and issues a progress report on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

**September:** U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention releases revised HIV testing recommendations for healthcare settings, recommending routine HIV screening for all adults, aged 13-64, and yearly screening for those at high risk.

**December:** U.S. Congress reauthorizes the Ryan White CARE Act for the third time.

Source: AIDS.gov



Thank you for taking the time to read the ACTG Network's Monthly Newsletter. If you would like to be a guest blogger, have your clinical research site highlighted or would like to nominate a colleague for the Spotlight, please [click here](#). We welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

**Patrick Bayhille**

**Senior Research Communications Specialist**

**AIDS Clinical Trials Group Network**

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