



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.



A Message from the Future ACTG Network Chair Dr. Judith Currier



Dr. Judith Currier

A Look Ahead to the Future of the ACTG Network

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as the new Chair of the ACTG Network. I am grateful to Dr. Daniel Kuritzkes for his leadership during his tenure as Chair and for his support of me in my new role. He has been an outstanding leader for the Network and I am pleased that he will continue to participate in our efforts. It has been my honor to help guide the research agenda as Chair of the ACTG Scientific Agenda Steering Committee (SASC) for the past seven years. During this time, we have successfully expanded our research agenda to encompass the prevention and treatment of Tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, inflammation and co-morbidities, and to address strategies for a cure and novel strategies for antiretroviral therapy. We are now poised to make high impact contributions to the field across each of these areas. I am also very much looking forward to working with Dr. Joseph Eron as he takes over the leadership of the SASC. His vast experience as an investigator and his comprehensive knowledge of HIV therapeutics are a tremendous asset for the Network.

The greatest resource of the ACTG Network is the people who collaborate to address our mission. An important aspect of the role of Chair is to recognize and support the contributions of all the constituents who make up the Network. This includes the dedicated and talented investigators in the clinic and in the laboratory, the hard-working experienced research staff at the sites and operations centers, the committed community members and our partners at the Division of AIDS, in Industry and from outside groups. I look forward to serving the ACTG Network to help us achieve our mission to cure HIV infection and reduce the burden of disease due to HIV infection and its complications.

Sincerely,
Dr. Judith Currier

Latest Update From the ACTG Network Puerto Rico Clinical Research Site

San Juan Clinical Research Site Still Facing Challenges After Hurricane Maria

Dr. Jorge Santana, Principal Investigator at our San Juan, Puerto Rico site recently shared the following update:

"We are back on track at the Unit. Power sometimes fails for several hours, but so far it has had minimal impact on the Unit and on our patients and study participants who have been able to keep their appointments. Things in general are moving slow on the island. Gasoline and diesel have been flowing more regularly. Communications are improving, but on a very slow basis. Internet outside the Medical Center where our clinic is located is very slow and erratic. Health services are improving and more hospitals now have power and are opening and working normal shifts. Other than several cases of Leptospirosis, stemming from the days after Hurricane Maria and the flooding, and some viral and bacterial conjunctivitis, we have been spared so far from any epidemic threat of Influenza or cholera. Power restoration is still very slow and there seems to be an unfortunate disconnect with regards to communications within the central parties involved with clean up and humanitarian efforts."

Signed-
Jorge L. Santana MD; FIDSA
Associate Professor Medicine
Principal Investigator/Director
AIDS Clinical Trials Unit ACTU
University of Puerto Rico
School of Medicine

ACTG Network Spotlight

REPRIEVE Project Manager, Personal and Professional Passions Intersect

Meet Katie Fitch

Katie Fitch, MSN, FNP, has been involved with the ACTG Network since 2014 when she took on the role of Project Manager for the REPRIEVE study, however her connection to HIV/AIDS goes back over two decades. Upon completing her undergraduate degree in International Studies and Spanish at the University of Washington, Katie worked at the 45th Street Community Clinic in Seattle and later at the Washington State Department of Public Health. While at the Washington State DPH, Katie was responsible for collecting HIV/AIDS surveillance data via face-to-face interviews. It was through these experiences that Katie came to understand firsthand the marginalization and stigmatization that people living with HIV/AIDS face daily. These experiences, coupled with her education, motivated her to become more informed regarding the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Latin America. To that end, Katie accepted a position with a small NGO, Educación Popular de Salud in Santiago, Chile. During this time, her main responsibility was working with lay healthcare workers in marginalized neighborhoods outside of Santiago to develop HIV prevention education strategies. [Read more>>](#)



Katie Fitch, MSN,
FNP

National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

A Clinical Perspective on the Importance of National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

October 15 was National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and served as a national platform to educate, bring awareness and mobilize the Latino community. The Latino Commission on AIDS, the Hispanic Federation and other organizations organize this day to build capacity for non-profit organizations and health departments to reach Latino/Hispanic communities, promote HIV testing, and provide HIV prevention information and access to care. This year's theme was "To Defeat HIV You're a Superhero. Use Your Superpowers."

A native of Mexico, Dr. Carlos del Rio received his medical degree at Universidad La Salle. He has focused his career on global health education and HIV/AIDS research and clinical care. Dr. del Rio is an Investigator at our Emory University site and Program Director of the Emory AIDS International Training and Research Program and Co-Director of the Emory Center for AIDS Research. He also a vocal advocate for the Latino community as this population is disproportionately impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

To read an informative fact sheet created by Dr. del Rio, [click here](#).

This Year in HIV/AIDS History: 2004

January: U.S. Congress authorizes the first \$350 million for the United States President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

February: UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Program on AIDS) launches The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS to raise the visibility of the epidemic's impact on women and girls around the world.

March: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the use of oral fluid samples with a rapid HIV diagnostic test kit that provides the result in approximately 20 minutes.

May: FDA issues a guidance document for expedited approval of low cost, safe, and effective co-packaged and fixed-dose combination HIV therapies so that high-quality drugs can be made available in Africa and developing countries around the world under PEPFAR.

June: Leaders of the "Group of Eight" (G8) Summit (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) call for the creation of a "Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise," a consortium of government and private-sector groups designed to coordinate and accelerate research efforts to find an effective HIV vaccine.

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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