



MSI H2P Network e-Newsletter

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Addressing HIV and Hepatitis C Prevention among students enrolled on the Campuses of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)



The Howard University MSI HIV/HCV Prevention Program (MSI-H2P) The Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) HIV/HCV Prevention Program (MSI-H2P) is built on the successful Gilead-funded HBCU H3P project that addressed HIV/HCV prevention on the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). MSI-H2P was designed to accomplish two priorities. Firstly, to educate MSI campus health

service providers on effective HIV/HCV testing and counseling approaches including PrEP; as well as the medical management of HIV/HCV co-infections among young adults. Secondly, to raise college students' awareness of the HIV/HCV threat by using effective social marketing campaigns. The overarching impact for the students is aimed at helping them reduce their personal HIV/HCV risk of infection. The project employed distance-based technology/social media and text messaging to educate students enrolled at the target MSIs and in so doing raise their awareness of HIV/HCV. Text messages were approved by Howard University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). In addition to on-campus providers, a significant number of off-campus providers participated regularly in MSI-H2P project. Thus; the project strengthened the HIV/HCV workforce of community providers and in this way helped to ensure that students seeking off-campus clinical care, can get it.

Our research has consistently shown that healthcare providers who participated in our skills building training report an increase in their knowledge and skills. This translates into the ability to provide quality clinical care for their patients. At the helm of the MSI H2P, Dr. Goulda Downer and her team partnered with the following Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to raise awareness of HIV/HCV on their campuses. They are: Dr. Patience Ekeocha, Associate Medical Director, Morgan State University (MSU), Dr. Judi Voelz, Medical Director of Health & Wellness Aggie Health & Wellness Center, New Mexico State University (NMSU), Ms. Jacqueline Awe, Director, Department of Student Development, Savannah State University (SSU), Feloniece Davis-Marsaw, Executive, Health Services, Texas Southern University(TSU), and Dr. Janette Bowers, School of Nursing, The University of the Virgin Islands.

This Project is funded by a grant from Gilead Sciences, Inc.

MSI HIV/HCV Prevention Program at Howard University
Page 1



Voice from the Field:
Jacqueline Awe, LMSW, MAC

Savannah State University (SSU)
Page 2



Voices from the Field:
Student Impact
Page 3



HU MSI H2P Survey: Students' Knowledge & Behavior Outcomes
Page 4



<https://www.huttc.org/MSI-H2P/>



Voice from the Field

*Jacqueline Awe, Director, LMSW, MAC
Department of Student Development Savannah State University*



Please tell us about the Savannah State University

Savannah State University (SSU) established in 1890 is the oldest public Historically Black University (HBCU) in the State of Georgia. Our mission is to develop productive members of a global society through high quality instruction, scholarship, research, service and community involvement. The University fosters engaged learning and personal growth in a student-centered environment that celebrates the African American legacy while nurturing a diverse student body. SSU offers graduate and undergraduate studies including nationally accredited programs in the liberal arts, the sciences and the professions. It has a total undergraduate enrollment of 3,895.

Please tell us about yourself and your successful role in implementing the MSI H2P.

As the Director for the Department of Student Development, I have been employed at SSU since 2004. I am a licensed Social Worker and Master Addiction Counselor. One key tasks in my role as Director is to initiate and implement HIV/HCV prevention programs at SSU . HIV testing is performed in the student health center. However, I have been successful in leveraging resources through public health collaboration and have incorporated testing in the university counseling center. This strategic approach has increased our resources by allowing counselors and student development staff to become testers. My team and I received grants from Georgia Department of Public Health, Georgia AIDS Coalition and The LINKS, to conduct various levels of primary and secondary prevention activities. The MSI H2P project has allowed us to utilize various successful culturally-specific strategies to engage our students and this has help them to safeguard their health via education, health promotion activities and reducing unsafe behaviors.

What has been your strategic approach in successfully educating the student body at Savannah State University's MSI H2P?

HCV was not a priority for us before MSI H2P. We are now aware of this on our campus and can address it head on. Regarding HIV we have expanded our PrEP education to students in order to help keep those who are negative from becoming positive. We strongly believe that prevention messages need to be continuous. This should not be 'a drop in the bucket' approach, where people celebrate one big event each year. We also employ a multimodal learning approach. Many interventions happen simultaneously. Therefore, using strategies that consider people learn differently and providing a combination of methods of delivery is necessary. At SSU, we utilize radio programming, education about MSI H2P, outreach, and testing. Students collaborate with Student Development Staff to do the programming. Peer ambassadors are educated on the topics and are released to do needs assessments and provide information and programming. Peers go to the resident halls, freshmen experience classrooms and engaged students in lunch time outreach in the student center, in order to complete the survey. In addition, the staff administers the surveys from each desk during the demonstration period.

What has been the impact of MSI H2P on the students at Savannah State University?

There have been two types of responses. On one hand some students confirm their understanding of the information and in so doing their knowledge is validated. On the other, a significantly higher percentage of students seem to be exposed to many myths and misconceptions about transmission and the current state of infection rates in our state and the nation. There doesn't appear to be an overall alarm, although our cities (Atlanta and Savannah) top the list of cities in Georgia with the prevalence of HIV. https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/HIV_EPI_2017_Fact_Sheet_20190128.pdf Students are teachable and they listen to information that is shared. Our hope is that the knowledge acquisition will translate into healthy sexual and HIV/HCV prevention behavior.

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Voices from the Field: *Student Impact*

“My experience in conducting the surveys was wonderful. I got to inform people about PrEP and the importance of it. While conducting the surveys there were a handful of people who had no knowledge about PrEP. They were comfortable enough to ask questions and want to learn about it themselves. I was able to help.” - Ry-Ann, SSU School of Social Work, Senior

“I am knowledgeable about HIV and PrEP, so it was helpful to have the background information to help people with questions. I was surprised that an overwhelming number of students do not know about basic HIV 101 Facts. Our students need more educational opportunities to help them take care of their sexual health.”

-Vernoda, SSU School of Social Work, Senior

“Fall 2019 I paired with Howard University in conducting surveys that study the knowledge that college students have on HIV. Being a part of this study has been a phenomenal experience because while conducting and administering the surveys I also got to educate the participants on HIV. I observed and learned that many students who took the surveys were aware of HIV, how it is transmitted and the dangers it does to the human body. The factors in which some were not educated on was the prevention methods of HIV and how to take care of themselves if they were exposed to the virus. Students did not know the methodology of PrEP. It was a pleasure to educate my college community on how they can protect themselves before they have sexual intercourse and after they have sexual intercourse. Conducting this survey achieved the goal of bringing awareness of HIV to Savannah State University.”

-Raveen, SSU School of Social Work, Senior

“It was an honor to assist the University of the Virgin Islands and Howard University, College of Medicine, with the HIV/HCV survey. As a nursing student, being a part of this project allowed me to not only be an educator, but also to learn. My role in this project included gathering students at UVI to take part in this survey, informing them of their confidentiality, and educating participants about how helpful the data collection would be. This project gave me an opportunity, as a nursing student, to assess the knowledge that the participants had on the topic.” —Nursing Student, UVI

“This project allowed me to become more comfortable in approaching individuals and being more competent in my health promotional skills. It allowed me to assess my strengths and weaknesses so that I may become a more capable healthcare professional. As a nursing student, I have already learned about PrEP. I found it very interesting that the questions about tattoos were also included in the survey. I feel the students who did complete the survey will be a lot more cautious. There are many individuals who may be interested in getting a tattoo. For those who may not already have one and has taken the survey, this will encourage them to do more research, to be cautious and to be safe. For those who are sexually active, I feel the survey reintroduced the usage of condoms, how HIV is transmitted, and the availability of PrEP.” —Nursing Student, UVI

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MSI HIV/HCV
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**Texas Southern
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**The University of the
Virgin Islands**

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Did You Know?

51% of young people living with HIV do not know their status
Only 24.5% of college students reported being tested for HIV



Howard University MSI H2P Survey

MSI-H2P: Students' Knowledge and Behavior Outcomes

The Student Data from the survey indicates the intervention had a positive effect on students' preventive behavior. Overall, knowledge about PrEP and safety measures to avoid contracting HCV increased as did self-reported condom use.

Gender: 65% Female / 35%

Race
75% African American/ 12% Multiracial/ 6% Latino/ 7% Other

Measures	Pre	Post
Consistent Condom Use	58%	89%

Measures	Pre	Post
Knowledge of PrEP	36%	90%

Measures	Pre	Post
Knowledge of safety measures for Body Piercing and Tattooing	45%	85%

HU MSI H2P TEAM

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