



# The Pitt Men's Study

News and Notes

Fall 2013

## Welcome, Dara!



At your next Pitt Men's Study visit you may encounter a new face drawing your blood or conducting your physical. Please join us in welcoming the newest addition to our staff, Dara Stern!

Dara Stern is a physician assistant (PA) who joined the Pitt Men's Study at the

beginning of October. She is a native Pittsburgher who has always revered the work of the PMS and is excited and honored to be a part of the team. Dara is a 2009 graduate of Chatham University's Physician Assistant Studies program. Her work as a PA has involved hematology consultations at UPMC Shadyside/Hillman and adult leukemia/hematologic malignancies at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. Prior to PA school, Dara worked for several years as a staff research assistant with the Pittsburgh Mind-Body Center at Carnegie Mellon University.

In her free time, Dara enjoys singing, cycling (carefully) around the streets of Pittsburgh, playing recreational softball, and occasionally getting lost in the woods of Pennsylvania.

## We Need You! Even If You're "Boring"

We hear it all the time from our participants: "Sorry if I'm boring." The truth is that we need all types of subjects who do all sorts of things – or *don't* do them, as the case may be.

If you are the type of participant who doesn't have many health issues, who doesn't have a lot of sex, who doesn't do any drugs – great! (Unless of course you want those things, in which case, more power to you). But even though it might seem like you have nothing to tell us at your visit, your participation is still incredibly important to us. What you don't do (or don't have) tells us, and the researchers who use your data in their studies, just as much as what you *do* do.

Our study depends upon your participation and we value it above all else. So please don't worry if you come into your appointment without a whole lot of new stuff to tell us. We want you here just as much as we always have. Boring is good!

## AIDS Quilt On Display

From Saturday November 30th to Sunday December 1st The Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church will be displaying two of the AIDS Memorial Quilts to the public. In addition, they will be holding a benefit concert with local musicians Saturday from 7pm-9:30pm. Drinks and light refreshments will be available, and proceeds will benefit the ongoing efforts of the Names Project.

Their address is 416 W North Ave (15212), across from Allegheny Commons West. It is served by bus routes 54, 13 and 16. Please be aware that, regrettably, the church is not wheelchair accessible.

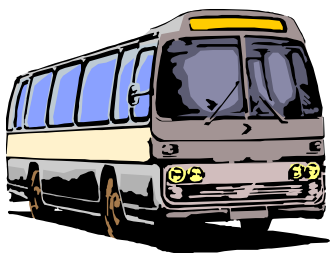
### The Pitt Men's Study

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## Need a Lift to Your Doctor's Appointments?



If you need help getting to your doctor, dentist, or therapist appointments, you may find help through the Allegheny County Medical Assistance Transportation Program. In order to qualify you must 1) live in Allegheny County and 2) get Medical Assistance through Best, Gateway, MedPlus or Access.

To find out more go to your local social service agency, medical center or **call Travelers Aid at 412-281-5474** to learn how to sign up.

Transportation will begin once you are signed up and eligible.

## Need Help Affording your HIV Meds?

Patient assistance programs (PAPs) are usually sponsored by pharmaceutical companies and provide free or discounted medicines to low-to-moderate-income, uninsured and under-insured people who meet the guidelines. Eligibility and application requirements vary from program to program - contact each company to find out more about their particular program.



Below is a directory of PAPs that include HIV medicines.

Company	Contact Info	Website
Abbott Laboratories	1-800-222-6885 1-800-763-0059 (ext.100)	<a href="http://www.abbottpatientassistancefoundation.org">www.abbottpatientassistancefoundation.org</a> <a href="http://www.welvista.org">www.welvista.org</a>
Boehringer Ingelheim	1-800-556-8317	<a href="http://us.boehringer-ingelheim.com">http://us.boehringer-ingelheim.com</a> Click "Our Responsibility" then "Patients & Families"
Bristol-Myers Squibb	1-888-281-8981 1-866-290-4767	<a href="http://www.bms.com">www.bms.com</a> Click on "Responsibility" then "Help Paying for your Medicine"
GlaxoSmithKline	1-866-728-4368 1-866-518-4357	<a href="http://www.gsk-access.com">www.gsk-access.com</a>
Gilead Sciences	1-800-226-2056	<a href="http://www.gilead.com/responsibility/us-patient-access">www.gilead.com/responsibility/us-patient-access</a>
Merck	1-800-850-3430	<a href="http://www.merck.com/merckhelps/patientassistance">www.merck.com/merckhelps/patientassistance</a>
Pfizer	1-866-706-2400	<a href="http://www.pfizerhelpfulanswers.com">www.pfizerhelpfulanswers.com</a>
Roche Laboratories	1-800-282-7780	<a href="http://www.gene.com/patients/patient-access">http://www.gene.com/patients/patient-access</a>
Tibotec	1-800-652-6227	<a href="http://www.jjpaf.org">www.jjpaf.org</a>

## Learn More About Proposed Medicaid Reforms

Last month PA Governor Tom Corbett backed the expansion of Medicaid, the joint federal-state health program for the poor, under President Barack Obama's health care law, proposing a set of reforms that would extend health coverage to more residents of the state.

Corbett outlined a plan that includes offering Medicaid to more Pennsylvanians by using private health insurance plans and instituting new requirements for all Medicaid enrollees, such as having them pay monthly premiums and demonstrate they are searching for jobs. The plan must pass the state legislature and also win approval from the federal government.

To read more about the proposed Medicaid reforms, visit this website: <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/healthypa/index.htm>

## You & Your Data

Questions, blood, urine, mental tests, even cups full of spit - we collect a lot from our volunteers at Pitt Men's Study appointments. So where does all that info go and what do we do with it? Below are some recent articles that appeared in scientific journals using data that you provided for us. The results aren't always groundbreaking or newsworthy - science generally moves in baby steps rather than strides - however without you and your data, none of these articles would exist.

Title of Article	Journal & Publication Date	The Gist of It
Uptake and Predictors of Anal Cancer Screening in Men Who Have Sex With Men.	American Journal of Public Health. 2013 Sept.	The researchers investigated attitudes about anal Pap smears among MACS men. Amongst many findings, the study demonstrated that the majority of the men surveyed were open to having anal Pap smears.
A Candidate Gene Approach for Virally Induced Cancer with Application to HIV-related Kaposi's Sarcoma.	International Journal of Cancer. 2013 Jul 1. [Epub ahead of print].	The researchers tried to determine if they could use a particular lab method for identifying genes that may lead to the development of Kaposi's sarcoma (an AIDS-related disease) or other viral-caused disease. They found the method effective, and said it may be useful for future studies.
Age, Comorbidities, and AIDS Predict a Frailty Phenotype in Men Who Have Sex With Men.	The Journals of Gerontology Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences. 2013 Oct 14. [Epub ahead of print].	Adults aging with HIV infection are at risk for frailty, a syndrome that embodies an elevated risk of catastrophic declines in health for older adults. This study found that older HIV-positive men had more characteristics associated with frailty than HIV-negative men, and that there were even more of these characteristics in men who had a history of AIDS.
Cause-specific mortality among HIV-infected individuals, by CD4+cell count at HAART initiation, compared with HIV-uninfected individuals.	AIDS. 2013 Oct 5. [Epub ahead of print].	This study compared three groups of HIV-infected men who started drug therapy at different times in their treatment. It found that those who started drug therapy earlier lived longer, were more likely to die of non-AIDS causes, and lived nearly equally long as HIV negative subjects. Subjects who started meds later did not live as long as HIV negative subjects.



## Happy (Belated) Halloween!

From your (slightly disturbed)  
friends at the Pitt Men's Study.

The Pitt Men's Study  
26th Annual  
World AIDS Day  
Commemoration

Monday, December 2, 2013



Heinz Chapel, 7:30 PM

Bellefield Avenue between Forbes and Fifth  
Next to the Cathedral of Learning

Reception to follow at the Community of Reconciliation at  
Bellefield and Fifth Avenue

*For more information or assistance,  
please call 412-624-2008*

**Have you ever  
wondered?...**

Why do we have  
to do those  
neuropsych tests?



What do you  
guys do with all  
the stuff you get  
from us?

What do my  
blood test  
results mean?

**For answers to these  
questions and more, visit**

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