



# update

spring 2006

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## PROJECT EMBRACE PURPOSE

*The goal of Project Embrace is to determine how to increase participation of African Americans and Latinos in HIV Vaccine Trials..*

### O u r P r o c e s s

We began our research by conducting 33 key informant interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to get the expert opinion of people in the field on what they believed the barriers and motivators were of participation and to get their feedback on the research process. We used what we learned from these interviews and brainstormed some themes and categories to guide the qualitative interview process. We held a community forum to introduce the study. Over 100 people attend and many provided input.

### O u r P r o g r e s s

To date, we have completed 36 interviews with people of different ages, races, and genders from the African American and Latino communities who were willing to share their personal knowledge, thoughts and opinions with us. These interviews were emotional, heart-felt and rich in content. We now have a wealth of information that we are beginning to analyze and use to develop new strategies to recruit African Americans and Latinos into HIV vaccine trials...

**See some of the 'Embraceable Quotes' from interviews below:**

## EMBRACEABLE QUOTES

### Stigma and Moral Attributions

*"If you caught that then you must be having some association with Black gay men, or something to the effect of that."*

*"AIDS, a lot of Latinos think, oh it's a gay disease like that. Or that's because you know, you messed around before you were married, something like that."*

**\*\*Why is this Important?** ~ In order to reach the communities most affected by HIV/AIDS, we must identify and address the moral attributions and stigmas that exist in our communities before we can feel comfortable participating in HIV research.

### Vaccine Knowledge

*"I don't think people would want to do it because, I mean, in the back of your mind, you're like, 'all right, so you're going to give me AIDS and then you're going to try and treat it? No!'"*

**\*\*Why is this Important?** ~ Educating people about how vaccine research is conducted and the details of what is involved is an essential step that must be taken in order to convince members of our communities that it is safe to participate in research.

### Activism

*"I know that if just one person can get up in there that really sticks to what they believe in and really can just stand--put a firm fist down, then maybe there can be some changes... We need to help our own people."*

**\*\*Why is this Important?** ~ Having young people with compassionate, hopeful outlooks in our communities is critical if we are going to come together to protect our future. Participation in HIV vaccine research allows us to become partners in the struggle to prevent HIV as well as witnesses to the studies that affect us.



**The First Project Embrace Community Forum  
September 17, 2005 at El Rio**

### **Next Steps:**

We have begun the creative process of developing a recruitment campaign which we plan to implement by the end of the year and evaluate shortly after. We will also be holding another community forum to present findings and feedback. We look forward to seeing you there.

### **LINKS:**

[www.HelpFightHIV.org](http://www.HelpFightHIV.org)

[www.sf aidsresearch.org](http://www.sf aidsresearch.org)

[Sfisready.org](http://Sfisready.org)

[www.hvtn.org](http://www.hvtn.org)

[www.avac.org](http://www.avac.org)

[www.iavi.org](http://www.iavi.org)

## **THE RESEARCH TEAM**

### **Sonya Arreola**

Sonya Arreola, PhD, MPH is the principal investigator of Project Embrace. She has a long history of clinical and research work with African American and Latino populations at risk for HIV. Dr. Arreola began working on HIV-related issues in the 1980s as a volunteer counselor for Spanish-speaking participants at an anonymous testing site. Since then, she worked as a health educator, and designed, implemented and evaluated a behavioral intervention program for HIV positive men for a California State funded AIDS Prevention and Follow-up Clinic. In this context, she worked with large populations of African Americans and Latinos, including Spanish-speaking patients. She also worked as the director of the Health Intervention Project in Long Beach, California, where she managed and implemented three effective programs for diverse populations. She then revised the three intervention programs to target Spanish-speaking Latinos, and hired and trained individuals who facilitated all three programs in Spanish. She also created and facilitated an ongoing educational/support group for HIV infected, Spanish-speaking men (who continue to meet informally). Currently she is leading the Project Embrace Research team in the execution and analysis of the qualitative research process.

### **Chadwick Campbell**

As an experienced outreach worker in the LGBT community, he has facilitated many workshops and programs dealing with sexual health and responsibility. He is currently a member of the San Francisco HIV Prevention Planning Council and is serving as a co-chair of a sub committee for the second year. Currently, he is playing a key role in this research study, while continuing his work with the Stop AIDS Project serving gay, bi, and trans men.

### **Beverly Jackson**

As a former Community Advisory Board member and a 15 year HIV services veteran, Beverly joined the Embrace Team with a wealth of knowledge. She has a strong connection to the communities we aim to serve. She has also worked as a recruiter for the clinical trials that have been conducted and are currently being conducted in the SFPD HIV Research Section.

### **Erika Molina**

Erika provides crucial support to the Project Embrace team. As a graduating student at San Francisco State University, and as the Recruitment Coordinator in the HIV Research Section, Erika is well connected with youth, ethnic, and gay and lesbian communities. She provides leadership in HIV prevention and other health related issues within the San Francisco Bay Area.

### **Gavin Morrow-Hall**

A long time activist in the gay and Black communities in San Francisco, he has led several successful efforts to bring community leaders and stakeholders together to encourage dialogue with researchers and increase participation in HIV research studies. He is currently an integral part of the Project Embrace research team, working to identify better methods of study recruitment for Latinos and African Americans into HIV prevention research.

### **Jennifer Sarche**

Jennifer is the Director for Community Education in the HIV Research Section. She has experience dealing with women's health and youth and is trained in communications and conflict management. She has lived in several different countries and speaks three languages and therefore has a wealth of experience adapting to and working with people of different races, ethnicities and cultures. Currently, Jen manages the recruitment teams for the various HIV Prevention studies in the Research Section and is heavily involved in creating ad campaigns targeted to the many communities that we aim to serve in the San Francisco Bay Area.