

# CC PrTNER: Improving Engagement in Substance Use Treatment Among Young Black and Latino Men At-risk for or Living With HIV

## Statement of Problem

In the U.S., young Black and Latino men who have sex with men (YBLMSM) are [disproportionately affected by HIV](#) and may be [more vulnerable](#) to [substance use](#) compared to their [older peers](#). Substance use significantly impacts the relationship between [HIV risk](#), diagnosis, initiation, and sustained antiretroviral therapy treatment (ART) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). Furthermore, high rates of substance use in YBLMSM have been identified as a [key factor hindering engagement](#) and adherence to HIV prevention and treatment care.

A key gap in HIV treatment adherence and prevention is an inability to consistently address co-occurring substance use that may mediate YBLMSM's experience within the HIV care continuum.

Approaches to substance use disorder diagnosis and care that are [integrated](#) with [HIV prevention](#) and [treatment](#) services within primary care settings have shown promise in increasing access to substance use and HIV prevention and care services. A [collaborative care model](#) is an evidence-based integrated mental health care model used in primary care settings. This project leverages the collaborative care model to address substance use, [co-occurring](#) with [mental health disorders](#) that particularly impact YBLMSM, and simplifies and normalizes the identification and treatment within the context of HIV prevention/care service provision.

## Description

### CC PrTNER: Improving Engagement in Substance Use Treatment Among Young Black and Latino Men At-risk for or Living With HIV



Our team will evaluate the impact of the collaborative care model to address substance use co-occurring with mental health disorders that particularly impact young Black and Latino men who have sex with men.

The Collaborative Care Prevention, Treatment, Navigation, Engagement, Resource (CC PrTNER) Intervention is based on existing collaborative care models and is modified to address the specific needs of YBLMSM at-risk for or living with HIV with co-existing SUD.

In partnership with Johns Hopkins University, this study occurs in two phases: (1) formative research and development of the CC PrTNER intervention and (2) a randomized control trial testing the efficacy of CC PrTNER to increase initiation of PrEP (for those at-risk for HIV), viral suppression (for those living with HIV), and engagement with substance use treatment among YBLMSM ages 15 to 24 who are at-risk for a substance use disorder.

Formative data collected via surveys and interviews with medical personnel (i.e., physicians, nurses, social workers, clinical leaders, etc.) providing HIV, mental health, and/or substance use prevention and/or treatment care to YBLMSM will guide the adaptation of existing collaborative care models.

Once the intervention is developed, we will evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and efficacy of the CC PrTNER intervention in a randomized control trial in participating clinics and community health centers in Philadelphia and Baltimore. YBLMSM ages 15 to 24 at-risk for or living with HIV who screen positive for SUD will be enrolled in the trial. Participants will be randomized into the intervention or standard of care arm and followed for 12 months. Participants will complete a survey on sexual health, care and engagement, and labs at baseline and every 3 months.

Participants randomized into the intervention arm complete additional visits with a peer coach trained in motivational interviewing and supported by an addiction medicine psychiatrist. Intervention participants meet with their coach weekly in the first month to build rapport and create goals with the coach. After the initial one month, coaches work with an addiction medicine psychiatrist(s) to provide support to participants based on their coaching sessions and monthly behavioral surveys. The coach additionally works with the primary care provider to provide recommendations from the psychiatrist.

CC PrTNER will compare outcomes of the intervention and control arms, including the proportion of YBLMSM with co-existing substance use at risk for HIV who initiate (start or restart) PrEP over the 12 months and the proportion of YBLMSM with co-existing substance use living with HIV who are HIV virally suppressed at 12 months. This study will also evaluate the effect of the intervention versus standard of care on non-tobacco substance use in YBLMSM with co-existing substance use and examine the effect of change in substance use patterns on PrEP uptake and HIV viral suppression.

## **Next Steps**

Our next steps include completing the formative phase and testing the CC PrTNER intervention to modify the model for clinical implementation across primary care and HIV care settings.

This study may provide key preliminary data for future development of collaborative care models that are culturally sensitive and appropriate for YBLMSM at risk for or living with HIV and a substance use disorder, as well as supporting clinic teams who provide substance use prevention and treatment care.

*This project page was last updated in June 2024.*

## **Suggested Citation**

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## PolicyLab Leads

# Renata Arrington Sanders MD, MPH, ScM

### Faculty Member

Renata Arrington Sanders (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and is the division chief of the Craig-Dalsimer Division of Adolescent Medicine at CHOP. She is also a professor of pediatrics and medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Prior to Dr. Sanders assuming the role of Division Chief at CHOP, Dr. Sanders was an associate professor in the Division of Adolescent & Young Adult Medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine with joint appointments in Infectious Diseases, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Departments of Epidemiology and Health, Behavior and Society.

Dr. Sanders' research interests focuses on expanding access to gender affirming care, caring for sexual and gender diverse youth (SGDY), and optimizing adolescent and young adult sexual health, HIV/AIDS treatment, and prevention interventions.

She serves on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Advisory Committee (CHAC) on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and STD Prevention & Treatment; the International AIDS Society (IAS) Governing Council and the Scholarship Program, Stigma Advisory Board, Abstract Review and Collaborative Initiative for Pediatric HIV Education and Research of the IAS; the Research Review Committee of the American Board of Pediatrics; the Board of Directors of Sex Ed for Social Change (SEICUS); and American Sexual Health Association. The CDC and the National Institute of Health fund her work to develop intersectional interventions for SGDY (R01 DA043089, R01 DA059022).



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# **Nadia Dowshen**

## **MD, MSHP**

### **Faculty Member**

Nadia Dowshen (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and serves as Director of Adolescent HIV Services in the Craig Dalsimer Division of Adolescent Medicine at CHOP. She is also an associate professor of pediatrics and the Associate Director of the Masters of Health Policy Research at the Perelman School of Medicine at University of Pennsylvania and a Stoneleigh fellow.

In addition to specialized care for youth living with HIV/AIDS, Dr. Dowshen also provides general adolescent medical care at CHOP and Covenant House, PA, a youth shelter located in Philadelphia. She recently co-founded the CHOP Sexuality and Gender Development Clinic which now provides medical and psychosocial support to more than 2,000 gender variant children and adolescents. Dr. Dowshen's research focuses on using youth-friendly technology to improve adherence to antiretroviral therapy and improve other health outcomes for adolescents living with HIV/AIDS. She is also interested more broadly in research around issues of STD and HIV prevention and treatment as well as achieving health equity for other marginalized youth including LGBT and homeless adolescents.

Dr. Dowshen received the 2010 Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine New Investigator Award for her research identifying protective factors against HIV infection among transgender youth. She was recently named an NIH Adolescent Trials Network (ATN) Scholar and a Best Young Investigator by the National Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR). Dr. Dowshen also serves on the Board of Directors of the Sexual Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), a national non-profit which promotes comprehensive education about sexuality, and advocates for the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. Dr. Dowshen received both her M.D. and Masters of Science in Health Policy Research from the University of Pennsylvania.



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# **Marné Castillo**

## **PhD, MEd**

### **Faculty Scholar**

Marné Castillo (she/her) is a faculty scholar at PolicyLab and serves as the clinical and research director of the Adolescent Initiative, a multi-disciplinary program for HIV prevention, care, education and research at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

Dr. Castillo is the principal investigator for CHOP's Adolescent Trials Unit, which is supported by the National Institutes of Health in addition to several other multi-site studies. From 2002 to 2017, she led the "Connect to Protect Project," the Adolescent Trials Network community-based prevention research study focusing on community mobilization and HIV primary prevention.

Dr. Castillo's work focuses on adolescent health promotion and community engagement in research, especially with the House and Ball and Kiki communities. She also has broader interests around social determinants of health, with a special interest in trauma and improving outcomes for marginalized adolescents. In 2015, Dr. Castillo received the Center for AIDS Research Red Ribbon Award recognizing her work on behalf of adolescents in the field HIV prevention research in Philadelphia. She has served on the Board of Directors of several organizations, including Philadelphia FIGHT and GALAEI. Dr. Castillo received her PhD in public health and her master's degree in education from Temple University.



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## Team

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## **Bevin A. Gwiazdowski** **MSW**

### **Clinical Research Project Manager**

Bevin Gwiazdowski (she/her) is a clinical research project manager at PolicyLab and within the Adolescent Initiative at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). In her time with CHOP, she has cultivated partnerships with other nonprofits and institutions in Philadelphia with a focus on creating and expanding opportunities, access, and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. She has also co-facilitated the POSSE CAB from its inception, facilitates a working group of trans health and wellness providers across the city, and serves as a member of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Community Advisory Group focusing on the House and Ball community.

With more than 15 years of direct service work with LGTBQ+ youth she has developed a particular interest in facilitating capacity building and leadership development within the communities she works. Bevin received her MSW from Temple University.



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## **Funders of Project**

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## **Related Tools & Publications**

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[Opportunities for Building Lifelong Resilience and Improving Mental Health for Adolescents Living with HIV Article](#)

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