

## **Punkin Clay Stephens, PA, M.Phil.**

### **New York State AIDS Institute**

P. Clay Stephens, PA, MPhil, holds a Joint Appointment as Senior Associate for Prevention Sciences and Applied Epidemiology in the Executive Office of the AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health, and Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the School of Public Health, University at Albany, State University of New York.

At the AIDS Institute, under the Direction of the Deputy Director for Prevention and Program Evaluation, she assists the New York State HIV Prevention Planning Group to better utilize HIV/AIDS data in their prevention/intervention planning efforts. Punkin Clay is also responsible for integration of epidemiologic data and methods into prevention programming, research, service delivery and contract management. She is the principal author of the annual publication, The NYS Epidemiologic Profile, and represents the AIDS Institute on numerous interagency workgroups including the Workgroup for Sexually Healthy Adolescents. At the School of Public Health (SPH), she teaches HIV/AIDS Epidemiology, advises students seeking advanced training in infectious disease and the HIV/AIDS/TB/STD arena. Since the 2007 academic year, Punkin Clay has served on the Public Health Council, the governing body of the SPH. In that capacity, she is also the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, the locus for student grievances and concerns. She enjoys working with SPH Student Interns and most years is able to provide training in the AI for 3-5 students per semester. Many of her interns and trainees are immigrants to the US and/or Foreign Students. Over the past 3 years she has also been able to arrange Summer Semester internships in Africa and in Argentina.

Since 2005, Punkin Clay and a fellow faculty member, Carol Whittaker, over Winter Holidays, have taken 7-15 SPH students to New Orleans to do recovery and rebuilding work. The 2005 contingent described their recovery work and a small research project in an oral presentation at the 2006 Conference of the American Public Health Association in Boston.

Ms. Stephens received her clinical training at UCLA/Harbor General Hospital in Southern California and did her academic work at Harvard and Yale where she is completing her dissertation. This document, "Studies in HIV Type-1 Transmission in Women", involves bench laboratory work as well as behavioral research. Her research topics have included (1) HIV survival and viral load in used injection

equipment for which she developed a microculture assay, (2) HIV viral load in cervicovaginal and menstrual fluids as compared to peripheral levels, (3) Quantification of qualitative data: How HIV-positive women in crisis communicate and form relationships, (4) The effects of gender-equality-based HIV/AIDS public health policy on programming and prevention for women and women and their families, (5) Sexual transmission of Hepatitis C, and (6) Street-level HIV counseling, testing, and intervention among commercial sex workers. With her co-author Kaveh Khoshnood, she has also addressed tailoring of syringe exchange schemes to better serve women.

Punkin Clay is active in the international training arena. With colleagues from the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, she staffs an NIH-funded HIV/AIDS Fogarty International Training Program in Argentina. She provides training in epidemiologic and research methodology and individual advisement to the 59 Argentine Fogarty trainees. In recent years, she has returned annually to Santiago de Cali, Colombia, with Alvaro Carrascal, an AI colleague and native Colombian, to co-present a two-day intensive "Short Course in HIV/AIDS Applied Epidemiology" for clinicians and Health Ministry personnel attending a continent-wide Infectious Disease Conference.

Punkin Clay is committed to the public health of communities and individuals who differ from the majority culture by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, sexual practice/expression, health status, education, age, religion, culture and/or language, ability/disability, access, and citizenship. She is committed to the training and advancement of public health practitioners from Communities of Color and disenfranchised communities. And, she is committed to an end to the HIV/AIDS and STD epidemics.

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