

# ALIVE Newsletter



## Welcome!

As research studies go, ALIVE is very long lived. The ALIVE Study has been "alive" for 23 years and counting. There are various reasons for this longevity. There are you, the participants, who are dedicated enough to keep showing up. If we had no one making and keeping their appointments, our researchers would have no data with which to do their analyses. There is the dedicated research team, whose training and powers of observation have created new and interesting research questions over the years. Their findings have led to papers published in scientific journals and continue to let the funders know that our research is worth ongoing investment. There are all of the support team members who have been and are currently dedicated to carrying out a multitude of tasks every day the study has existed. They are, to name a few: 1) Interviewing participants then entering the data; 2) analyzing it, drawing, storing, and testing the blood; 3) managing the front desk with all the phone calls and checking participants in and out of the clinic; 4) conducting physical exams and gathering medical records; 5) working with participants; and 6) every 5 years, writing the grants that fund the study.

Each of the reasons listed above contain a common word – dedicated. Everyone involved with this study is dedicated and no one was more dedicated to the ALIVE Study and you, the participants, than Chuck Spoler. If you have not already heard, Chuck was hit by a car and died while crossing a road near his home in Shrewsbury, PA on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Losing Chuck is like losing your favorite friend or relative. He had a way of getting right to what makes us all human. He could feel you and say it like it is. You knew he cared. His heart was big and passionate. He lived life like diving into the deep end of a pool. There was nothing shallow about Chuck. He always spoke authentically, even when his words came out a bit raw. Continued on page 2.

### Inside this issue:

- In Memory of Chuck 1
- Overdose Prevention 2
- New is ALIVE Research 3
- Staying Alive 3
- Ongoing Studies 4
- New Study 4
- Quit Smoking 5

## *In Memory of Charles "Chuck" Spoler*

The location for the Memorial Service:

Virginia S. Baker Recreation Center

2602 E. Baltimore Street

Baltimore, MD 21224

It is located on the grounds of Patterson Park where Luzerne Ave. meets E. Baltimore St.

Date: September 15, 2010

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.



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# Welcome continued...

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Some of you may have known Chuck when he worked at 911 Broadway. He came to work with the ALIVE Study almost 15 years ago to work on a project about hepatitis C and liver disease. This was his day life, but what many people don't know is that he also lived an artistic life. Chuck was a playwright and actor. In over 10 years, Chuck wrote 20+ plays. They have been produced at Spotlighter's Theater in Baltimore, York Little Theater in York, PA, as well as off Broadway theaters in New York City. His plays have won numerous awards. But that's not all. He and his wife, Linda, have a farm in PA where they shared their life with their herd of goats, sheep, rabbits, alpacas, as well as dogs and cats. Many of you know that Chuck was living with Hepatitis C infection. He began the course of treatments last year and was still (successfully) undergoing them at the time of his death. His viral load was undetectable.

Chuck lived a diverse life with gusto. He didn't shy away from controversy. He dished out humor with a laser tongue and took risks like no one I know. He is the kind of person you miss deeply because there are very few "Chucks" in the world. And to honor Chuck's life and all his years of dedication to the ALIVE Study, we will be holding a Memorial Service on September 15<sup>th</sup> at the Virginia S. Baker Recreation Center in Patterson Park (see page 1 for more details). I hope you will join the staff of the ALIVE and Liver studies to share your stories about Chuck and celebrate a life too soon lost.

-Director Lisa McCall

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## New in ALIVE Research: How We Are Trying to Help You!

Thanks to our participants, the ALIVE cohort has been able to observe injection drug users (IDUs) who are HIV positive since 1988. Between 1996 and 2008 ALIVE followed 582 HAART-eligible IDUs in Baltimore, MD. We wanted to better understand who was starting HAART and why. Our goal is that all HIV-infected persons get diagnosed with HIV early, get in to see a doctor quickly, get on therapy when they need it and stay on therapy once they have started. This can be hard when people have a lot of other things going on in their lives including their drug use. We found that a lot of our participants haven't yet started on HAART even though they need it or start very late after they should first go on. Our goal is to try and understand why it is difficult to get on HAART quickly and try and help to overcome whatever it is that stops people from getting on therapy early.

## **How to Prevent an Over Dose**

Overdosing on drugs is a major cause of death in America. Don't be a victim of overdose. Know the signs of an overdose, and know what to do if an overdose happens to you or someone you know. And be aware that an overdose can happen to anyone, new drug users and long time users.

### **SIGNS OF A HEROIN OVERDOSE**

- Passing out
- Blurred Vision
- Blue Lips, Nail or Skin
- Stopped Breathing

### **SIGNS OF A COCAINE OVERDOSE**

- Fast Breathing
- Fast Heartbeat
- Seizure
- Heart Attack or Stroke

If an overdose does happen seek immediate medical help by calling 911 or the National Poison Control Center at 1.800.222.1222.

## **Staying Alive: How to Prevent Death if an Overdoes Does Occur.**

The Baltimore City Health Department offers a program known as "Staying Alive". This program teaches individuals how to recognize an opiate/ heroin overdose and how to correctly respond to the overdose to prevent death using the drug Naloxone ( also known as Narcan). This drug can reverse the life-threatening symptoms of an overdose.

For more information and a training schedule call Director Chris Serio-Chapman at at 410. 396. 4398.

# On Going Studies

## ALIVE

- **AIDS Linked to Intravenous Experiences (ALIVE)** is a community based study that consists of past and current injection drug users (IDUs).
- The ALIVE study allows us to understand: 1) The risk factors of HIV 2) The natural course of HIV and AIDS and 3) The effects drug use and related intervention have on participants with HIV/AIDS.

## EXACT

- The EXACT Study is looking at new ways to collect information from people in the ALIVE Study.
- EXACT also investigates how participants' drug use is affected by stress and their environment.
- Andy will contact eligible participants in September

## SHIELD

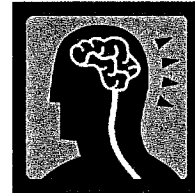
- This study is currently enrolling individuals who are active study participants in one of the following studies: AIDS Linked to the IntraVenous Experience (ALIVE), Johns Hopkins HIV Clinical Cohort (JHHCC) or Study to Help the AIDS Research Effort (SHARE).
- The purpose of this study is to collect and compare smoking histories and respiratory symptoms between HIV-infected and HIV-uninfected persons.
- Contact Antonietta at SHIELD

## New Neuroscience Study

How your brain works and doesn't work can directly impact drug seeking behavior. Through this study we may find that your brain plays a significant role in your decision to start treatment or even staying in substance abuse treatment.

This study will allow us to see how drug use, HIV and HCV can impact your brain. For instance, do you forget to take your medications? Forgetting to take your

medication can result from a poor memory. Drug use, HIV and HCV may be causing you to have a poor memory interfering with your ability to take your medications.



# Quit Smoking!!!

Nicotine is an addictive drug that costs a lot of money and ruins your health. Fortunately there is counseling and medications available that can help ease cravings and help you quit!

Thanks to Annamarie we have a list of resources below that can help you quit smoking, now!

## ***Baltimore Medical Systems***

**What:** Free patches, group and one-on-one Counseling and behavior modification provided to anyone.

**Where:** Highlandtown Community Center, 3509 Eastern Ave, Baltimore, MD 21224

**When:** Call Carol Hilton, 410-558-4879

## ***Chase-Brexton Health Services, Inc.***

**What:** Free patches, group therapy and behavior modification in a six-week course

**Where:** 1001 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

**When:** Mondays 5:30 –7 pm; Call 410-545-4481, ext. 2617

## ***People's Community Health Center***

**What:** Free patches, group and one-on-one counseling

**Where:** 3028 Greenmount Avenue, Baltimore MD 21218

**When:** Contact 410-467-6040.

## ***Total Health Care***

**What:** Four-week one-on-one program with free patches (after determining eligibility and may request for a physician note that you're cleared to take the patches), free group therapy and behavior modification

**Where:** On Wednesdays mornings at 1501 Division Street Baltimore, MD 21217

**When:** Call 410-383-8300 for appointment or 410-728-4091 for Mr. Kevin Grodnitzky about "quitting smoking".

## ***Union Memorial Hospital***

**What:** Free six-week program offered quarterly to anyone (even if you don't access care here or have health insurance) with one-on-one counseling and behavior modification. 6-8pm.

**Where:** 201 E. University Parkway, JPB building Ste. 107 Baltimore, MD 21218

**When:** Call 410-554-6590, ask for the quit smoking program with Marylu Manning and for a scheduling between 8am and 5pm.



**Quit Today!**

213 McElderry Street  
Baltimore, MD 21205

*Address label here?*