

**North Jersey Community Research Initiative  
a.k.a North Jersey AIDS Alliance****Community First****Special points of interest:**

- About NJCRI
- Message from the Executive Director
- Coming soon!!  
Neighborhood Family Care.

**Inside this issue:**

- Project ACCESS / Needle Exchange Program. **2**
- Clinical Trials: Volunteers Needed! **2**
- A word from Freeman Palmer, Director of Finance **3**
- NBHAAD **3**
- Save These Dates **4**

**About NJCRI**

The North Jersey Community Research Initiative (NJCRI) is New Jersey's largest and most comprehensive HIV/AIDS community-based organization.

**Our mission** is "to help people with HIV/AIDS and those at risk for HIV/AIDS." We conduct state-wide HIV clinical trials, and HIV treatment, care and prevention services in the Greater Newark Area. Populations we serve include youth and adults, men and women, men who have sex with men, people who acquire or who are at risk for HIV through injection drug use, and others.

NJCRI also seeks to address the concerns and disparities of access to health care faced by minority populations. Some of the non-HIV related services we offer include behavioral research, chronic illness management education, street outreach, substance abuse treatment, transportation, food pantry, and technical assistance to other community-based organizations. Approximately 5,000 people avail themselves of our free and confidential services each year.

**Executive Director's Message****Edward Martone, Acting Executive Director**

Greetings, I'm proud to note that NJCRI continues to operate a multi-faceted and high quality agency in the midst of the worst economic times since the Great Depression. While every non-profit organization is facing similar challenges in this environment, here at NJCRI, we've been struggling to provide our clients and patients with a safe and comfortable physical plant along with an expansive array of free, confidential and needed services.

We have just entered into an agreement with a group of volunteer attorneys to provide free legal assistance to some of our formerly incarcerated clients in certain civil matters.

NJCRI continues to make improvements to its headquarters, including the leasing of new copy machines, construction of new offices, and upgrades to our phone and computer systems.

We've met with representatives of the Newark Board of Education and hope to have them conduct free GED, literacy, ESL and Spanish GED courses in our building for our clients. The target start date is Labor Day.

NJCRI will shortly be receiving referrals of certain inmates who are being released from the Essex County Jail to our HIV and other on-site services.

**Continued on Page 2**



## Addiction and Educational Department

### Project ACCESS

NJCRI opened its syringe exchange program (SEP) Project Access on February 19, 2008. The program is authorized by the State of NJ and the city of Newark to distribute sterile syringes to injection drug users and to accept used needles for proper disposal. Recently there has been a noticeable increase in the number of clients coming for the first time. Two factors have contributed to this increase. The first is that injection drug users are finding out about the program through word of mouth. In fact, we have seen an increase in clients bringing in friends and partners to the program. The second and more significant change is the deployment of four trained outreach workers to areas of high incidence of heroin use on a daily basis. As of February 10, 2009 NJCRI's Project Access has enrolled 360 clients.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Mon & Tues  
1:00—4:00 p.m.

Wed, Thurs & Fri  
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Saturdays & Sundays  
**CLOSED**

For more information call  
(973) 483-3444 x 132

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### *Clinical Trials Need Volunteers!!!*

### **New Clinical Trials are starting. Volunteers Needed!**

NJCRI is looking for people 18 years of age and older who are co-infected with Hepatitis-C and HIV with a viral load of >1000 and have a detectable HCV viral load.

For more information, contact the Clinical Trial Department at (973) 483-3444 ext 125/135.

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### **Executive Director's Message Continues...**

Our Project SOARS ended and has been replaced by PROJECT COPE, a community outreach prevention and education program targeted to minority community members who are engaged in risky behaviors, with a focus on those over 44 years of age.

NTAP has closed and the CHETA (Community Health Education and Technical Assistance) project has picked up where NTAP left off.

NJCRI was awarded a mini grant to implement a Chronic Disease Self-Management Program.

The talented staff at NJCRI will successfully meet the challenges presented by the economic recession, but only with the continued support of our Board of Trustees and donors, along with the understanding of our heroic clients and patients.



## The Sky is falling...

By Freeman Palmer  
Director, Finance

Perhaps you may remember the story of Chicken Little and the famous declaration “the sky is falling!” In the story, Chicken Little believes the sky is falling because an acorn lands on her head.

More and more people are losing their homes to foreclosure and filing for bankruptcy. We have seen a \$700 billion bailout package, financial giants and banks in deep trouble, and a tumbling stock market. A number of people have understandably approached me asking if NJCRI safe in light of the turmoil affecting the economy. Given the financial challenges in recent years at NJCRI, this is a perfectly reasonable question to ask.

My answer is that no business, institution, or agency is immune to economic times good or bad. However, NJCRI finds itself in a relatively well insulated position during this period. This insulation is due largely in part of the composition of our finances. NJCRI has an operating budget of over \$4.8 million, the vast majority of which is in government grants and contracts. Dollars associated with these contracts are committed to the agency, and for the most part, we receive funding for these programs on a regularly scheduled basis. The economic crisis may affect the level of donations expected from individuals and foundations this year, as donors typically give depending on the growth or decline of their own investments in the stock market. While this funding is important to our agency’s financial flexibility, contributions are a relatively small percentage of our budget. Therefore, our risk and vulnerability in this area is relatively small at this time.

However, this does not eliminate the need for being diligent in our financial management. Many of us know that funding for HIV/AIDS at all levels has been flat at best for the past several years. Unfortunately, all of us know that costs continue to rise. These times are no less critical with respect to being as prudent and efficient as we can to ensure our financial well-being in the hopefully short duration of this crisis and years to come

Yes, the economic skies are cloudy. Thankfully here, they are not falling. Let us continue to fulfill our mission, using our resources as best we can to meet the great need for the health and well-being of the clients we serve. And remember, the moral of Chicken Little is, don’t believe everything you hear.....

## What a great success!!

### World AIDS Day!

NJCRI’s 3rd Annual World AIDS Day, held at Newark Symphony Hall on December 1, 2008 went extremely well. We were able to provide a great wealth of educational information, HIV Testing and entertainment to over 500 individuals in the Essex County area. We were able to test over 20 high-risk individuals who had never tested in the past for STI and HIV. Many of our invited guests stated that they enjoyed the event.

### National Black HIV AIDS Awareness Day!

NJCRI-CTR and Jehovah-Jireh Worship and Praise Community Church hosted the NBHAAD event on Saturday, February 7, 2009 from 4:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m. The event consisted of the history of NBHAAD, many youth from the community performed poetry, Praise Danced and heard testimonials from individuals who are living with HIV. Our special guest was the Honorable Mayor Wayne Smith of Irvington, NJ.

We tested many from the local congregation and the community, and distributed over fifty (50) canvas bags filled with literature, condoms and goodies. We raffled off a total of nine gift cards ranging from \$10-\$100. A special thanks goes to Nelson Hernandez, NJCRI’s Project Renew Manager, for his contribution of items to raffle.

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## SAVE THESE DATES

### *Women's Group*

Friday, March 6, 2009 from 10:00—12:00 noon at NJCRI, 393 Central Avenue, Newark NJ. For information about upcoming meetings, call (973) 483-3444 x 115

### *United We Stand, Night of Outreach*

End of March 2009 (TBA) United We Stand, Night of Outreach will be hosting its first meeting at NJCRI, 393 Central Avenue, Newark NJ. For information call (973) 483-3444 x 203

### *Live Healthy, Live Happy Workshops*

April 23, 2009 from 6 - 8:30 p.m. at NJCRI, 393 Central Avenue, Newark NJ. For information call (973) 483-3444 x 184

### *National HIV Testing Day*

Saturday, June 27th, 2009 at NJCRI, 393 Central Avenue, Newark NJ. For information call (973) 483-3444.

*Seeking Cures For Tomorrow  
Providing Support For Today!*

