

## Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health at the University of Miami

### Executive Summary

The proposed Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM) at the University of Miami is one of several mental health AIDS Research Centers (ARCs) funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and it is located in one of the regions of the United States hardest hit by HIV/AIDS. CHARM encompasses core faculty from across the University, and our leadership comes from the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Nursing and Health Studies and the Miller School of Medicine. It aims to address and strengthen mental health-related HIV prevention and care research at the University of Miami and reduce the impact of mental health disparities as barriers to behavioral and bio-behavioral approaches in HIV prevention and care. CHARM supports and mentors new and established investigators, provides research methods assistance, supports culturally-competent research addressing HIV/AIDS-related mental health factors, and collaborates with local communities and local health agencies to support mental health HIV/AIDS research.

The Center currently consists of four Cores: Administrative, Developmental, Mental Health Disparities and Methods.

Administrative Core: The Administrative Core provides scientific and programmatic leadership, overall management, strategic planning, and support for the Center. It also coordinates community engagement activities and manages coordination of the Executive Committee with the Internal Advisory Board and External Scientific Advisory board.

Developmental Core: The Developmental Core provides the mechanism for funding for pilot projects consistent with the center aims that maximize the chances for later NIH-supported high-impact HIV/AIDS mental health science.

Mental Health Disparities Core: The Mental Health Disparities Core promotes research on HIV-related mental health disparities by providing expert consultation on intervention development with diverse populations, qualitative and mixed-methods research, use of culturally competent assessment measures (including translation of behavioral measures and use of existing translated measures), and equitable human participants research with disenfranchised populations. It also recruits and follows people at risk for or living with HIV to maintain a consent to contact patient database.

Methods Core: The Methods Core provides expertise in research design, statistical analysis (quantitative, including multi-level models, implementation science, cost-effectiveness), and data management.

The Center is led by a Director who reports to the Vice Provost for Research. The Center leadership is embodied in the *Executive Committee (EC)*, comprising of the Director, Co-Directors, the Core Directors and Co-Directors, and the Scientific Director for Community Engagement. An *External Scientific Advisory Board (ESAB)*, which is comprised of external experts and two University of Miami-affiliated Center users, assists the Director and the Executive Committee in guiding the direction of the Center, evaluating progress toward the Center and Core aims, and identifying and addressing emerging scientific priority areas. An *Internal Advisory Board (IAB)*, which is comprised of University of Miami stakeholders and research leaders with expertise in leading multi-component center and program project grants, works with the Director and the Executive Committee to synergize the Center's efforts with existing biomedical

HIV/AIDS research at the University of Miami. A *Community Advisory Board (CAB)*, which is comprised of people living with HIV, people at risk for HIV, and people with past or current mental health concerns, helps the Director and the Executive Committee define community priorities and plays a key role in research implementation and dissemination activities.

## Introduction

The AIDS Research Centers (ARCs) Program at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) seeks to foster a synergistic approach to research on mental health issues of HIV infection. Its goal is to encourage the application of multiple scientific perspectives and approaches to stimulate inter- and multidisciplinary collaboration and coordination. NIMH ARCs are broadly based investigative endeavors, encompassing or supporting research in a variety of areas, including biological, biomedical, behavioral, neuroscience, prevention, clinical sciences, and services research. Below is a list of the other funded NIMH ARCs:

- [Center for AIDS Intervention Research \(CAIR\)](#) based at the Medical College of Wisconsin
- [Center for AIDS Prevention Studies \(CAPS\)](#) based at the University of California, San Francisco
- [Center for HIV Identification, Prevention, and Treatment Services \(CHIPTS\)](#) based at the University of California, Los Angeles
- [Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS \(CIRA\)](#) based at Yale University
- [HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies](#) based at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Columbia University
- [Penn Mental Health AIDS Research Center \(PMHARC\)](#) based at the University of Pennsylvania

The Center for HIV Research and Mental Health (CHARM) at the University of Miami is a behavioral science hub advancing mental health HIV research in a US region hardest hit by HIV/AIDS. The overarching Center theme, **“Reducing the Impact of Mental Health and Minority Health Disparities across the HIV Prevention and Care Continuum,”** is directly relevant to the uncontrolled HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Greater Miami area. CHARM will consolidate, coordinate, and augment University of Miami institutional resources as well as develop and expand regional and national collaborations. Miami has the highest HIV incidence and prevalence of any US city and fares worst, geographically, on every Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC indicator of HIV impact. This Center is of high public health significance, as Miami’s diverse populations face significant mental health disparities, making the area an ideal setting for mental health research across diverse populations disproportionately affected by the epidemic.

The overarching goal of CHARM is to increase local mental health HIV/AIDS research consistent with the Center’s theme. CHARM will promote research that mitigates the impact of mental health and minority health disparities across the HIV prevention and treatment continuum. CHARM has the unique potential for high-impact research addressing HIV among hardest-hit populations in greatest need and at greatest risk for falling off of the HIV prevention and treatment continuum.

### Charter for the Proposed Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health at the University of Miami

The following paragraphs describe the proposed Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM) at the University of Miami. This Center will catalyze high-impact research efforts addressing mental health disparities, answering key questions related to HIV prevention and care.

## **Mission and Theme**

The Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM) at the University of Miami aims to bridge the boundaries that have traditionally divided behavioral and biomedical research to catalyze mental health HIV science in one of the regions of the United States hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, with the overarching theme of ***“Reducing the Impact of Mental Health and Minority Health Disparities across the HIV Prevention and Care Continuum.”*** CHARM offers the expertise, infrastructure, community partnerships, and resources necessary to build the momentum of mental health HIV science at the University of Miami to reduce HIV-related health disparities by optimizing bio-behavioral approaches for HIV prevention and care.

## **Organizational Overview:**

### **Executive Committee (EC)**

#### **Membership:**

The Executive Committee (EC) consists of faculty members from departments represented in the Center and those who contributed to the Center grant application, including the Center Director, Center Co-Directors, Core Directors and Co-Directors, and the Scientific Director for Community Engagement. EC members are selected by the current Director and Co-Director(s) of the Center. At the discretion of the EC, other University of Miami faculty members may be invited to join the EC either during the current grant period (4 years) or in the next grant cycle (i.e., in grant reapplication). EC members will serve a period of at least 4-5 years, depending on the length of the current grant period.

#### **Charge:**

The EC reviews and monitors individual Core activities, ensuring that all proposed activities are conducted in a timely manner and as outlined in the grant application. The EC also works with the Developmental Core to set priorities for Pilot Awards Program solicitations and to make final award decisions. In addition, the EC monitors and shapes the evolving roles of Center personnel.

#### **Meetings:**

The EC will have onsite meetings or video conference calls on a monthly basis and additionally as needed.

### **External Scientific Advisory Board (ESAB)**

#### **Membership:**

The External Scientific Advisory Board (ESAB) is comprised of external experts and two University of Miami-affiliated Center users. ESAB members are selected by the EC at the beginning of each grant period (4-5 years) and is comprised of investigators who are leaders in the field, directors or leaders of existing NIMH AIDS Research Centers, behavioral scientists in regional Centers for AIDS Research, and leaders in HIV prevention and treatment. The ESAB members will serve a period of at least 1 year; ideally, the ESAB members will serve a period of at least 4-5 years.

#### **Charge:**

The ESAB assists the Director and the Executive Committee in guiding the direction of the Center, evaluating progress toward the Center and Core aims, and identifying and addressing emerging scientific priority areas. Additionally, the ESAB will make recommendations to the EC on how to improve the Center so that it can become a national and local resource for HIV, mental health and health disparities research.

Meetings:

The ESAB has onsite meetings or video conference calls with the EC on a biannual basis.

**Internal Advisory Board (IAB)**

Membership:

The Internal Advisory Board (IAB) is comprised of University of Miami researchers with expertise in leading multi-component centers and program project grants. At the time of writing this application and at the initiation of the Center, the IAB consists of the Director and Co-Director of the Miami Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), the Director of the Institute of AIDS and Emerging Infectious Diseases, and the Director of the Miami Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI). IAB members are selected by the EC. The IAB members will serve a period of at least 1 year; ideally, the IAB members will serve a period of at least 4-5 years.

Charge:

The IAB works with the Director and the EC to will focus on review of Center and Core aims, particularly for optimizing collaborations within UM, maximizing the diversity of our investigators, and strategic planning that is responsive to the evolving epidemic in South Florida.

Meetings:

The IAB has onsite meetings with the EC on a biannual basis.

**Community Advisory Board (CAB)**

Membership:

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) is comprised of people living with HIV, people at risk for HIV, people with past or current mental health concerns and/or people affiliated with a community-based organization. The CAB members are selected by the Center's Scientific Director of Community Engagement after receiving recommendations from UM faculty and community-based organizations. CAB members will serve for a period of at least 1 year; some CAB members will serve for up to 4-5 years, depending on the length of the current grant period.

Charge:

The CAB helps the Director and the Executive Committee define community priorities and plays a key role in research implementation and dissemination activities. The CAB assists the Center's Developmental Core by reviewing pilot award applications and other applications for external funding.

Meetings:

The CAB has onsite meetings with the Scientific Director for Community Engagement on a monthly basis.

**Faculty Membership**

The initial membership of the Center was determined by the Center Director and Co-Directors. For the initial core faculty members, the Center Director and Co-Directors invited individuals who were conducting research consistent with the aims and scope of the Center. The faculty affiliated with the Center are those who are a Core Director or Co-Director, a Center or Core Co-Investigator or Significant Contributor (as outlined in the current grant). The length of membership will be dictated by the length of the current grant, typically 4-5 years. Membership is open to any University of Miami investigator interested in or conducting research related to the aims and scope of the center, and broadly related to mental health or behavioral aspects of HIV/AIDS.

Faculty affiliations and positions/titles (e.g., Center Director and Co-Director, Core Director and Co-Director, Center or Core Co-Investigator, and Center or Core Significant Contributor) will be reviewed and discussed by the current Center Director and Co-Director(s) approximately 1-2 years before the end of the current grant period in preparation for the grant reapplication process. In advance of the grant reapplication, the current Center Director and Co-Director(s) will invite current or new faculty to affiliate with the Center for the grant reapplication. Faculty members will be invited based on: a) their research and mentoring experience, b) their area(s) of expertise, c) their history of receiving research funding from NIH or CDC, and d) recommendations by the IAB. Additionally, faculty members can join on a rolling basis.

#### **Evaluation**

The Center Director and Co-Director(s) will evaluate the progress on the Center objectives/aims on a yearly basis at the time when the annual progress report is due to the sponsor (NIMH). This process will involve reviewing the objectives/aims and timeline outlined in the current grant and developing a written report outlining the progress on each objective/aim and activities. Additionally, the Center EC will meet with the IAB on a biannual basis to review progress on all activities. During and after the conclusion of the IAB meetings, the IAB members provide feedback and suggestions for future growth and improvement.

Evaluation of the Center Director will be done on a biannual basis during the IAB meetings, where both EC and IAB members will provide feedback on the direction of the Center, Center leadership and progress on the Center objectives/aims. Additionally, the Center Co-Director(s) will meet with the Center Director approximately 3-4 times per year to discuss administrative and scientific issues and overall Center progress – during these meetings the Center Co-Director(s) will provide feedback to the Center Director.

#### **Amendments to the Charter**

The Charter described in this application will be reviewed by the Center Director and Administrative Director on a yearly basis to determine if significant changes need to be proposed to the CHARM EC. In the event that changes are needed, the proposals will be reviewed and approved by the Center Director, Center Co-Director(s), Center EC and IAB before submitting the amendment(s) to the appropriate party(ies) for approval.

#### **Center Cores**

The Center currently consists of four Cores: Administrative, Developmental, Mental Health Disparities and Methods.

#### Administrative Core:

The Administrative Core provides scientific and programmatic leadership, overall management, strategic planning, and support for the Center. It works with the Core Directors to ensure fiscal management and fulfillment of reporting requirements. This Core plays a major role in facilitating cross-core activities, ensuring synergy across the Cores, and liaising with the other resources at the University of Miami. This Core also leads the CHARM Community Advisory Board and all community engagement activities, which are central to the Center's work.

#### Developmental Core:

The Developmental Core provides the mechanism for funding for pilot projects consistent with the center aims that maximize the chances for later NIH-supported high-impact HIV/AIDS mental health science. This Core takes the lead in ensuring dynamic and supportive mentorship and capacity-building for early stage investigators, working also with the University of Miami Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) to include perspectives at the interface of behavioral and biomedical sciences. The Core also offers pre-submission peer-review for both external (NIH) and internal (Developmental Core) grant proposals and for scientific publications.

#### Mental Health Disparities Core:

The Mental Health Disparities Core promotes research on HIV-related mental health disparities by providing expert consultation on intervention development with diverse populations, qualitative and mixed-methods research, use of culturally competent assessment measures (including translation of behavioral measures and use of existing translated measures), and equitable human participants research with disenfranchised populations. This Core maintains two "consent-to-contact" databases for participant recruitment: one for community members at risk for HIV/AIDS and the other for people living with HIV in care at the University of Miami/Jackson Health System HIV clinic.

#### Methods Core:

The Methods Core provides expertise in research design, statistical analysis (quantitative, including multi-level models, implementation science, cost-effectiveness), and data management. This Core manages a (voluntary) data repository and unified data architecture to optimize users' ability to access formative data as well as engage in resource sharing. The Methods Core supports the Mental Health Disparities Core by managing the technical aspects of and access to the two consent-to-contact databases as well as the Shared Instrument Library.

#### **Location**

The Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM) at the University of Miami has locations throughout the University. The Administrative Core is located on the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine campus in the Soffer Clinical Research Center (CRC). Having the Center located on the medical campus and in the Soffer CRC is vital to maintain ongoing collaborations with the Center's affiliated departments (Public Health Sciences (Soffer CRC), Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences (Soffer CRC and Dominion Tower), Psychology (Soffer CRC) and Medicine/Infectious Diseases (Soffer CRC)).

#### **Budget**

The Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health at the University of Miami is primarily funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (P30MH11687) and supplemented by some University of Miami institutional support. This funding provides salary support for CHARM key personnel, supports pilot award applications, the Community Advisory Board, Center-specific research initiatives (e.g., expansion

of HIV-specific consent-to-contact databases), research seminars and community events, scientific infrastructure and other operational expenses of the Center.






**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: October 30, 2019

TO: Linda Neider, Ph.D., M.B.A.  
Chair, Faculty Senate, University of Miami

FROM: Philip McCabe, Ph.D.   
Chair, Department of Psychology

SUBJECT: Support for Establishment of the Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health  
(CHARM) as a University of Miami Center

The faculty of the Department of Psychology and I approve and endorse the establishment of the Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM) as a University of Miami Center. On September 12, 2019, the department's faculty unanimously voted in favor of this proposal.

Thank you.

