



CERC-SON-UVI

# A RICH VI NEWSLETTER

## HSRP-VI Year II Highlights—Part II

Noreen Michael, PhD

### Notable Tidbits:

- The Human Services Research Partnership: Virgin Islands (HSRP-VI) has a Memorandum of Cooperative Agreement with the V.I. Department of Human Services.
- The Partnership roster has included current and former Head Start and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families clients.
- Members of the Core Research Team attended the culminating activity of the Human Services Research Partnership: Puerto Rico and met the research team. The USVI group received four publications the accomplishments of the HSRP-PR.

**THE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP:** Year II of the Human Services Research Partnership: US Virgin Islands (HSRP-VI) was an eventful one! In the second half of Year II, the Research Partnership continued to be engaged. Because of the need to actively engage Partners during the completion of the Environmental Scan research project, Partners came together once in the third quarter and twice in the fourth quarter of Year II. In the 3rd quarter meeting, work began on identifying three HS/EHS issues and three TANF Issues that could be further explored to improve program delivery and outcomes. The two meetings in the 4th quarter provided further opportunities for Partners, working with the Core Research Team and consultants to further streamline priority issues into working research questions for further exploration. There was also a training session for Partners focused on reaffirming the CBPR principles guiding the Partnership's work and clarifying Partner engagement in the research process.



**RESEARCH ACTIVITY:** The HSRP-VI completed data collection activities in support of the an environmental scan study. Presentations were made in Partnership meetings sharing key findings related to the HS/EHS and TANF programs. The presentations served as the springboard for Partners' identification of priority programmatic issues for translation to research questions.

**COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT, & DISSEMINATION:** There was significant activity in this area in the second half of Year II. First, the project's microsite was updated with an updated Project Fact Sheet highlighting key project activities. Copies of this Fact Sheet were shared with HS/EHS and TANF clients. Additionally, an updated listing of Partners and Associates was added to the project's microsite, along with photographs and brief biographies of the project's Core Leadership Team. Finally, ACF's Fall 2016 newsletter, CURRENTS, highlighted the Core Team's meeting with then ACF Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Greenberg and Regional Administrator Joyce Thomas.

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### SPOTLIGHT ON PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS



**VIVIAN ST. JUSTE, [EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER (FRC)]**— I believe serving with the HSRP-VI Partnership to be of benefit to the special populations that our agency supports. As FRC continues to offer no-cost services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other violent crimes, we offer insight on the needs of persons who are generally not in the limelight due to the nature of their victimizations. Family Resource Center values the sound partnership which benefits persons / families we serve.



**MICHELLE SIMON-NICHOLAS [EMPLOYMENT TRAINING OFFICER—DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES—DIVISION OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE—JOBS PROGRAM]** — Collaborating with the Human Services Research Partnership (HSRP-VI) has been instrumental. Knowing that the research completed thus far benefits so many deserving families, of Head Start, Early Head Start (HS/EHS) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is encouraging. As a witness, I see the Partnership relies on the support of many entities with unselfish interests to lend their expertise for the betterment of the community. Much promise can be held

knowing that the issues faced by many families have surfaced and can be addressed as a result of the research. As one of the individuals who work closely with TANF participants, I am privileged to be their voice to represent their concerns in their absence.

# HSRP-VI RECOVERING RESEARCH POST-HURRICANE IRMA AND MARIA

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**We're on the Web!**  
<http://uvi.edu/academics/nursing/cerc/default.asp>

As we prepare for another hurricane season, it is a time to reflect on what we have accomplished since our last newsletter. Although we continue to share office space and like everyone else are still challenged with intermittent power outages, telephone disruptions and internet access, we have still managed to move forward with our research agenda.

Two of our research projects had to be postponed but we have developed two new proposals to address issues arising out of our recent disasters. The first project will look at Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) and will examine the needs of parents, teachers and other staff to determine the impact of the hurricanes on their lives and on service delivery. Our other goal is to build program resilience by determining what

policies and procedures can be implemented in the event of another disaster. The second research proposal will look at the impact of the hurricanes on TANF staff, clients, and other organizations that work with the TANF program.

As with the HS/EHS program we will be assessing the impact of the hurricane and the policies and procedures that can be used in the event of future disruptions in the U.S. Virgin Islands. As we enter the upcoming hurricane season **Promising Practices** recommended by SAMHSA provide a useful strategy we can adapt and employ. We will PREPARE for any eventuality; RESPOND to the research needs in the community even as we RECOVER; and we endeavor to use the findings from our research to INFORM decision making and ASSIST our partners and stakeholders in the Territory.



Source: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac-brochure.pdf>

## MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE HSRP-VI TEAM



My experience as a hurricane survivor profoundly impacted my outlook on professional goals and personal values. When I learned of the opportunity to become a team member at CERC, I

was thrilled with the possibility of joining this team of dedicated and respected researchers. CERC is not a newcomer to engaging in relevant applied research that includes the beliefs, ideas, and knowledge of community members, coupled with the rigor of evidence-based methods. The HSRP-VI project continues CERC's legacy of conducting impactful, culturally relevant research that aims to improve and expand the knowledge base concerning health disparities in the USVI. I look forward to continuing the process of engaging in this research, making sense of the data and sharing the results with all stakeholders – the entire Virgin Islands community.

**A. DeGannes**

### HSRP-VI CORE TEAM:

Lead PI: Noreen Michael, PhD  
Co-PI: Gloria Callwood, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Co-Investigator: Janis Valmond, MS, DrPH, CHES®  
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow: Deborah Brown, PhD  
Project Coordinator: Asha DeGannes, PhD  
Research Associate: E. Aracelis Francis, PhD

## DATA COMMITTEE

CHARGE	OBJECTIVES	MEMBERS
The <b>DATA COMMITTEE</b> is charged with actively engaging in the completion of the Environmental Scan; Using information from the Environmental Scan activities; and supporting efforts of the Partnership to implement data system that can be used by researchers interested in conducting research related to human services programs in the USVI; Emphasizing, within their specific agencies, the critical need for reliable, valid, complete, and secure data; Capacity building in the area of data collection, e-storage, and use for decision-making.	To document current capacity for conducting research on HS/EHS and TANF program	Noreen Michael, Chair, UVI *Michal Rhymer-Browne, (VIDHS) Co-Chair (through 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter, Year 1) Janis Valmond, Co-Chair, UVI Desiree Bennet-Felix, VIDOL Terry Daley-Stanley, VIHA *Asha DeGannes, ECC, UVI (through 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter, Year 2) Kim Holdsworth, CFVI (through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter, Year 1) Frank Mills, RPS, UVI *Randolph Thomas, VIDE (through 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter, Year 2) Carissa Zakers, VIDE Lennox Zamore, VIDHS (through 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter, Year 1)
	To provide guidance and leadership on the completion of the Environmental Scan the determination of the elements of the Human Services data system that needs to be established	
	To provide guidance and recommendations on the viability of VIVIS as a platform to house the Human Services data system	
	To provide leadership in championing the use of data for policy and program decision-making, particularly as it relates to the HS, EHS, and TANF programs in the USVI	

We acknowledge the work of the Data Committee for adhering to the tenets of the CBPR approach, and guiding the extensive data collection and analysis required for the completion of the environmental scan.