

## **RAMP Project Abstract: DECATUR, GEORGIA, USA**

**Project Title:** Sexual Health Priorities and Barriers and Facilitators to Engagement in HIV Prevention Research among Transgender and Gender Diverse Adults

**Project Type:** Long-term 9-12 months

**Proposed Project Dates:** May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

**Project Site:** Hope Clinic of the Emory Vaccine Center, Decatur, Georgia

**Project Overview:** The Hope Clinic of the Emory Vaccine Center, located in Decatur, Georgia, is a clinical-translational research facility where investigators conduct basic human immunology studies, social-behavioral science research, and vaccine clinical trials to expand the field of HIV prevention science. For this project, the RAMP scholar will work with HIV researchers and community engagement staff at the Emory Hope Clinic. The scholar will spend 7 months on-site learning how to conduct gender-inclusive sexual health research (i.e., how to recruit, consent and enroll gender minority participants) and acquiring skills in qualitative data collection and analysis. For this study, all participants are asked to complete a sexual health survey and then a subset of participants will undergo in-depth interviews. Following completion of the surveys and interviews, the scholar will work closely with the study team to analyze the data and prepare an oral presentation and manuscript for publication.

*Ideally, the scholar will work on-site at the Emory Hope Clinic and at partner locations for recruitment events. If COVID-19 surges prevent work on-site, the project can be conducted remotely with the use of secured online virtual platforms for conducting participant interviews and for meeting regularly with the mentor and other members of the study team.*

### **Project Summary:**

This project seeks to better understand the sexual behaviors and sexual health priorities of transgender and gender diverse individuals to identify factors that serve to facilitate or prevent engagement in HIV prevention research. We will enroll 30 transfeminine, 30 transmasculine, and 30 non-binary/genderqueer participants to complete a sexual health survey. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a sample of 10 participants from each study group (n=30).

The primary objectives of the study will be accomplished using a mixed methods approach:

1. A sexual health survey will be used to characterize sexual behaviors, HIV risk assessment, methods used for HIV/STI prevention, and attitudes toward participation in HIV prevention research.
2. In-depth interviews will be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of sexual experiences, sexual health research priorities, and current facilitators and barriers to engagement in HIV prevention research, including HIV vaccine clinical trials.

**Regulatory requirements for the project and plans for completing them:** The proposal will be submitted to the Emory University IRB in February 2022. This will allow adequate time for approval before the project starts in May 2023. The scholar will be required to complete CITI and GCP training prior to starting with research activities.

**Expected Deliverables:** The RAMP scholar will spend 7 months on-site training in qualitative research methodology and completing the surveys and in-depth interviews. The following 5 months will be on- and off-site for data analysis and for preparation of the HVTN Full Group Meeting poster/oral abstract presentation and manuscript.

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