

New Staff at the Tobacco Dependence Program



Claribel Beltrez

Administrative Assistant

Claribel is the Administrative Assistant for the Tobacco Dependence Clinic/Program. She is a Certified Software Application Specialist, bringing many advanced computer related skills to the program. Claribel's ability to speak fluent Spanish provides bilingual services to patients, as well as enables the department to easily translate materials for this special population.

Jose A. Cruz, BA

Clinician & Community Outreach Coordinator

Jose A. Cruz received his BA from Cornell University in 1999 and is an MSW, LSW candidate for Fall 2007 from Rutgers University School of Social Work. He is working with the Proyecto Vida: Latino Deje de Fumar initiative which is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to provide culturally competent tobacco cessation services to the Latino community in New Jersey. Coming from a family where going to college is considered a luxury, he found working extensively in Residence Life at Cornell University and Rutgers University to be a privilege. In that capacity, he was able to share with students from various cultures and countries how wonderful and life-changing the college experience can be. After college, Jose continued to help others through his work as a Health Educator/Outreach Worker in Manhattan, NY where he focused on culturally diverse populations dealing with issues such as HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and immigration issues.



Heather M. Jordan, MPH, CHES

Program Development Specialist & Clinic Coordinator

The Tobacco Dependence Program welcomes new staff member, Heather Jordan, into the roles of Program Development Specialist and Clinic Coordinator of the newly created Newark Tobacco Dependence Clinic.

Heather came to UMDNJ-SPH from George Washington University in Washington, DC where she was a Department Finance Manager and Administrator in the School of Public Health and Health Services. Prior to her job at GWU, Ms. Jordan worked as a Project Coordinator for the Parkinson Foundation of the National Capital Area. She obtained a BS with honors, in her fields of specialization (Marketing/Health Planning and Management) from Alfred University in 2000. In 2004, Heather obtained an MPH with a concentration in Maternal and Child Health from GWU, was inducted into Delta Omega, the Public Health Honor Society, and became a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). She completed the Tobacco Dependence Treatment Specialist training in 2006. Heather is currently a doctoral student in the Health Education and Behavioral Science Program at UMDNJ-SPH.

A Student's Perspective

by Tyree Oredein, MPH

I am a second year doctoral student at UMDNJ pursuing my DrPH in Health Education and Behavioral Sciences. My passion is adolescent health and my long-term goals include designing, implementing and evaluating culturally sensitive programs that will reduce high-risk behavior, including tobacco use, in at-risk youth. I am interested in effective peer support group strategies to help youth who want to stop using tobacco. To that end, in April 2006 I began an internship at UMDNJ's Tobacco Dependence Clinic as a Research Assistant for the Youth Quit2Win Program, a smoking cessation program for high school students.

Youth Quit2Win is a peer support group with ten facilitated sessions whose topics cover health information, smoking cessation techniques, and media literacy. In the initial pilot study 129 young people participated in the treatment. Currently, I am analyzing this data. I would like to identify demographic, social or clinical trends between youth who are successful in quitting or significantly reducing their tobacco consumption, and those who failed to make significant progress. In the interest of effective groups and participant retention, it is also beneficial to identify any attributes consistent with youth who regularly attend the support groups and those who drop out prior to the designated "quit day".

In future research, I plan to work with urban, minority youth populaces. I would like to implement and evaluate peer support tobacco cessation groups held in urban areas where I would like to determine potential patterns among urban minority youth who succeed in reducing their tobacco use, and those who do not. In addition, I would like to further explore the potential role menthol plays in making cigarettes more appealing and addictive. Further, most smokers initiate tobacco use in early or pre-adolescent years. While the Youth Quit2Win program does not address the issue of prevention, I am interested in the use of media, and media literacy as strategies to prevent youth from smoking. I would also like to develop media-related prevention programs in urban schools and community based settings as resources in these locales are often sparse and insufficient.

Interning at the TDP is a wonderful learning experience. It has increased my interest in tobacco-related issues, and allows me to experience the practical side of research. I am able to apply concepts I've learned in the classroom, and see them play out. With respect to the faculty, they are very obliging and helpful. I am fortunate to be able to sit side by side with researchers and clinicians, ask questions, receive feedback and give input. As a doctoral student, this is invaluable as some things simply cannot be learned in the classroom, or from a textbook.