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NEWS RELEASE

CATEGORIES: Health & Medicine; Health & Medicine / Nursing

Rachel Jones, Rutgers College of Nursing Faculty Member, Receives \$2 million Grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research to Study Soap Opera Videos Delivered on Cell Phones to Reduce HIV Risk in Urban Women

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(NEWARK, N.J., Dec. 16, 2008) – Rutgers College of Nursing faculty member, Rachel Jones, has been awarded a four-year, \$2 million grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research at National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study the effects of a series of soap opera videos designed to reduce HIV sexual risk behavior in young women living in urban areas. The videos will be accessed on video-capable cell phones.

Jones, assistant professor at the College of Nursing at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and her team, are currently filming the urban soap opera series with a \$154,400 grant from The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey. "With funding from the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, we are able to create this series of 12 soap opera videos with a professional staff of filmmaker and actors. The grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research at NIH will allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach in reducing HIV risk in women," said Jones.

The series of video vignettes is based on content analysis of several focus group discussions with women between the ages of 18 and 25. By presenting realistic stories, via a soap opera format, women can identify with the heroines' emotionally charged process of change, according to Jones.

"The videos will be viewed over cell phones so that women may view them repeatedly and in privacy. If the aims of this study are achieved, the use of cell phones to view videos could change the paradigm of how health promotion is communicated between clinic sessions," Jones, a Boonton Township, N.J. resident, said. "The popularity of the cell phone and use of the Internet offer a new communication channel to address the health disparities in young urban women."

Jones previously was a recipient of a National Library of Medicine (NLM) grant to create a computer-based interview that would categorize level of HIV risk and provide a version of a pilot soap opera video entitled, "A Story about Toni, Mike and Valerie" that was tailored to participant's specific risk level. The pilot video is now available online at <http://www.stophiv.newark.rutgers.edu/>

Jones was recently awarded the New York Times Tribute to Nurses, Educator of the Year Award and the Zonta Club of Essex County as Woman of the Year. She was selected as the first recipient of the Rutgers-Newark Provost's Community Engagement in Research Award for her AIDS/HIV research and she was also named by Nursing Spectrum as its 2008 New York/New Jersey regional finalist for its Nursing Excellence program.

From its headquarters in Newark, Rutgers College of Nursing offers a broad range of academic programs on all three Rutgers campuses. The college offers a master's program with unique practitioner specialties, a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, and was the first to offer a Ph.D. nursing degree in New Jersey.

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