

## Miriam NIH grant to study phone-based mindfulness for HIV patients

*First facility in the nation to evaluate phone-delivered MT*

PROVIDENCE – The Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine at The Miriam Hospital has received a \$146,000 research project grant from The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health to explore whether telephone-delivered mindfulness training (MT) can help individuals living with HIV better cope with stress, anxiety and depression; increase their adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART); and promote healthy behaviors. The Miriam Hospital is the first facility in the nation to evaluate phone-delivered MT for people living with HIV.

A form of meditation, mindfulness is an awareness of the present and moment-to-moment activities. It is a fundamental ability of the mind, but studies have shown that it is a teachable skill and mindfulness levels increase with training.

“Mindfulness has been proven effective in lessening anxiety, depression and physical symptoms associated with many medical conditions ranging from cancer to rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia,” said **MICHAEL CAREY, PhD**, lead researcher and director, The Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine. “However, few studies have examined mindfulness training for those with HIV.”

Consisting of several phases, this research project will determine the feasibility and acceptability of phone-based MT and explore its effectiveness for improving ART adherence and promoting healthy behaviors. First, a series of focus groups will be conducted with up to 30 individuals including those living with HIV, HIV care providers and HIV advocates. They’ll share their perspectives about what is needed to expand the care provided at The Samuel and Esther Chester Immunology Center at The Miriam Hospital, and help

inform new immunology center health programs that are in development. The information will be used to refine related programs and research materials.

Next, a clinical trial will assess 50 immunology center patients who will be provided with one of two health improvement programs. Both programs will be designed to address the health needs of people living with HIV. One will feature mindfulness meditation and the second program will feature broader health promotion programs with specific content determined following completion of the focus groups. The study phases will include an individual baseline assessment and individual intervention conducted via phone, as well as a three-month follow up. At the time of enrollment and again over the subsequent three months, all patients will complete surveys and provide specimens to measure the effectiveness of both programs.

“Preliminary research suggests that traditional mindfulness training can help people with HIV cope more effectively with stress, but it has limitations and there is little to no information available about the possible effect of MT on ART adherence and other health behaviors,” said Dr. Carey.

Other researchers in the study include **ELENA SALMOIRAGIO-BLOTCHER, MD, PhD**, a research scientist at The Miriam Hospital Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine and an assistant professor of medicine and assistant professor of epidemiology at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Brown’s School of Public Health; and **AADIA RANA, MD**, an internal medicine and infectious diseases physician at The Miriam Hospital and an assistant professor of medicine at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University. ❖

## Miriam recruiting for clinical trial of Parachute device to treat heart failure

PROVIDENCE –The Miriam Hospital is actively recruiting participants for a U.S. clinical trial of the Parachute device for treating heart failure. The study is focused on determining if the new minimally invasive catheter-based device can slow the progression of heart failure, reduce repeat hospitalizations and death, and significantly improve quality of life for patients who experience enlargement of the left ventricle after a heart attack. The only site in Rhode Island to take part in the study, The Miriam has already completed the Parachute implant on two

local patients. The Parachute device, an experimental treatment, is the first of its kind in the U.S.

“Presently, there are very few treatment options available for patients who experience enlargement of the left chamber of the heart, which makes this clinical trial crucial,” said **PAUL GORDON, MD**, director of the cardiac catheterization laboratory at The Miriam Hospital and principal investigator of the trial there. “Heart attack survivors currently suffering from heart failure may be candidates for the Parachute

device research study and should discuss their condition with their physician.”

The Parachute device works by separating the damaged muscle from the healthy, functional segment to decrease the overall volume of the left ventricle and restore its function.

The PARACHUTE IV randomized clinical trial explores the effectiveness of the device by comparing it to medical therapy and placement of an internal cardiac defibrillator (ICD) in approximately 500 patients with ischemic heart failure at up to 65 centers. ❖