

turning knowledge into practice

Successful Strategies for Tracking and Retention of Homeless and Unstably Housed HIV Positive Longitudinal Study Participants

Presented by:
Maria DiGregorio

42nd Annual IFD&TC



RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute

Paper Authorship

- Noëlle Richa, RTI International
- Jeremy Morton, RTI International
- Maria DiGregorio, RTI International
- Barbara Bibb, RTI International
- Daniel Kidder, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Angela Aidala, Columbia University

Overview of Presentation

- Background of Housing & Health Study
- Summary of Retention Rates
- Tracking Tools and Strategies Leading to Successful Retention Rates
- Recommendations for Future Studies of Difficult to Locate Populations

Study Goal

Examine the impact of providing housing to people living with HIV and AIDS who were homeless or at severe risk of homelessness.



Study Background

- Funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- 629 participants across 3 sites (Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles)
- Randomized into two groups:
 - Housing Group
 - Customary Care Group

Study Background (cont'd)

- **Two types of site-based data collected**
 - CAPI interviews
 - Bio-markers (blood sample)

- **Four data collection points**
 - Baseline, 6 month, 12 month, 18 month
 - Interim field tracking activities at 3, 9 and 15 months

18 Month Retention Rates

- **85%** for all eligible cases
- **93%** excluding deceased and incarcerated

Follow Up Retention Rates Excluding Deceased & Incarcerated

Number and Percent Complete: Eligible Cases (excluding deceased and incarcerated)

6 - Month			12 - Month			18 - Month		
# Elig	# Comp	% of Elig	# Elig	# Comp	% of Elig	# Elig	# Comp	% of Elig
605	576	95.2%	590	550	93.2%	572	531	92.8%

Useful Tools for Retention & Tracking

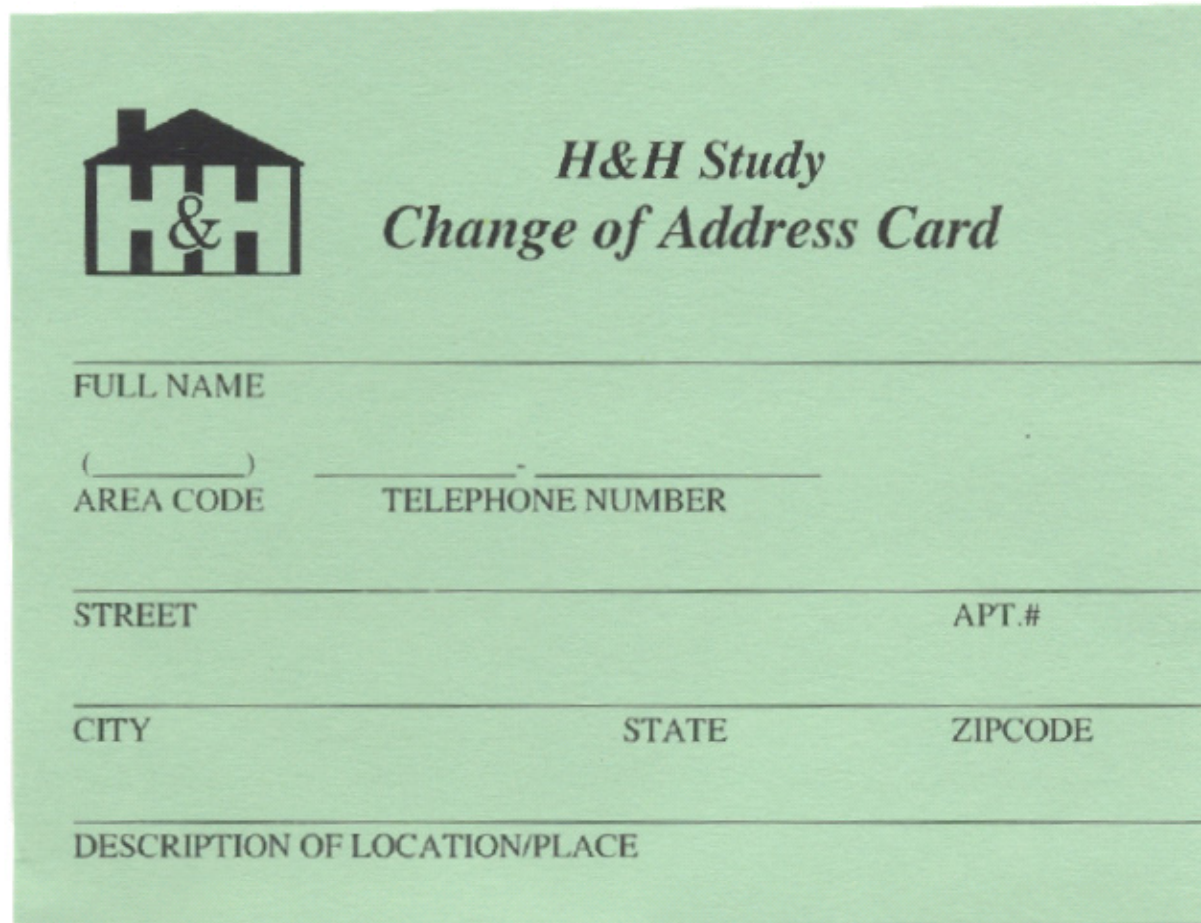
Tools that worked . . .


Baseline Contact/Location Form

Sample Questions

- **What other names do you go by, such as a nickname or a different last name, like your maiden or unmarried name?**
- **Where are you currently staying?**
- **What type of place is that?**
- **Is there a phone number there where we can reach you or where you can take calls?**
- **What message should we leave for you if someone else answers the phone?**

Change of Address Post Card



 *H&H Study*
Change of Address Card

FULL NAME

() AREA CODE - TELEPHONE NUMBER

STREET APT.#

CITY STATE ZIPCODE

DESCRIPTION OF LOCATION/PLACE

Trying to Reach You Letter



Hello _____

We are trying to reach you for your next Follow Up Visit with us!

You will receive up to \$55 for your next visit.

Please contact the H&H office at 213-389-7184 Monday through Wednesday 9:00AM to 4:00PM to talk with a staff person.

You are important to us and we don't want to lose touch with you.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you!

Case Manager Cards

The H&H Staff are trying to reach you for your 12-Month Follow-Up Visit.

You will receive **\$60** dollars for participating.



Please call the office at **213-389-7184** or the toll-free Participant Hotline at **1-800-845-6698**.

Non-Monetary Tracing Incentives

<u>3 Month</u>	<u>9 Month</u>	<u>15 Month</u>
Yellow water bottle w/logo	McDonald's coupons	McDonald's coupons
Jumbo pill box w/logo	Flashlight keychain w/logo	Toiletry accessory kit
McDonald's coupons	First aid kit w/rain poncho	MCI prepaid phone card
Flashlight keychain w/logo		
Fleece beanie		

Interview Incentive

Baseline	\$40
6 Month	\$55
12 Month	\$60
18 Month	\$75

Other Tools

- Letter to incarcerated participants
- Toll-free participant hotline
- Online prison searches

Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

Strategies that worked . . .

Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

- **Hiring interviewers who were also good trackers**



Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

- **Delivering non-monetary gift in person**



Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

- **Maintaining frequent communication with family members or friends who could pass along messages from the trackers**



Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

- **Using photo from study ID card to recognize participants**



Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

- **Visiting community service centers and shelters at the time when participants are arriving**



Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

- **Building rapport with community organizations to secure their cooperation in tracking respondents**



Field Strategies for Retention and Tracking

- **Communicating with case managers**



Most Productive Tracing Contacts / Resources

- Known homeless hang outs/ neighborhood areas
- Participant's listed contact persons / family
- State prison inmate services / on-line services
- Case Managers / agency contacts
- Soup kitchens
- Local shelters

Recommendations for Future Studies of Difficult to Locate Populations...

- Establish relationships with local agencies and community-based organizations early.
- Hire diligent and dedicated field staff.
- Treat staff well to maintain commitment and high morale.
- Make participation a positive experience for study participants and ensure that the participant is respected and appreciated.

Recommendations for Future Studies of Difficult to Locate Populations...

- Maintain ongoing visibility in the community.
- Create a clear separation in perception of the “project” versus an “agency program.”
- Make in-person contacts with participants between follow-up periods.

Recommendations for Future Studies of Difficult to Locate Populations...

**In a nutshell: Diligence, maintaining ongoing
visibility in field, and beating the bushes**



Contact Information

**For questions or comments please contact
maria@rti.org**

Paper and slides available at

www.rti.org/ifdtc