

## Evaluating Targeted Methadone Treatment as a Strategy for Preventing HCV/HIV Infections in Young Injectors

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**Project Description:** Over the last six years, the UFO Study has conducted a series of community-based epidemiologic studies in injection drug users (IDU) under age 30 in San Francisco (The UFO Study, PI: Moss). In May 2002, UFO, San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), and the Opiate Treatment Outpatient Clinic (OTOP) at San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) embarked on a pilot program to provide free drug treatment and primary medical and psychiatric care to young IDU to prevent new HCV and HIV infections. Ten methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) slots at OTOP were designated for young HCV-negative and HIV-negative IDU. Using specialized eligibility criteria designed to select for those young injectors most likely to benefit from treatment, 10 young IDU enrolled into the OTOP program for the ensuing year. Programmatic data were collected on a quarterly and semi-annual basis, and blood specimens were collected quarterly. This year, an additional five MMT slots will be provided by the SFDPH for this fledgling program this year; a total of 15 young injectors will enter and complete one year of this pilot program.

With this CAPS Innovative Grant, we will conduct a program evaluation of the first 15 patients to participate in the UFO-OTOP Methadone Maintenance Treatment program. We will analyze data from the first 12 months of follow-up on the 10 young injectors currently enrolled, and follow an additional 5 eligible young opiate-dependant IDU to be referred and enrolled this year. The program evaluation will provide valuable information for refining components of a medication-assisted treatment program intervention specifically designed for younger drug users, and will inform a larger intervention study proposal.