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# 2022 Health Care Heroes: IU professor studies HIV, Hepatitis C prevention

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*Greg Carter, assistant professor at the IU School of Nursing, has focused his research on health disparities among sexual minorities. (IBJ photo/Eric Learned)*

**Honoree, Non-Physician**

**Greg Carter**

*Assistant Professor, Indiana University School of Nursing*

*Co-director, Rural Center for AIDS and STD Prevention*  
*Fellow, Kinsey Institute Research*

Greg Carter, an assistant professor at the Indiana University School of Nursing in Bloomington, has spent much of his career studying and researching health disparities among sexual minorities.

His work “saw no boundaries in 2021, as he built the framework to expand access to care for Indiana’s under-represented communities and shape the next generation of health care professionals who are ready to address emerging patient needs,” his nomination reads.

Carter said he works under the umbrella of harm reduction and much of his research has focused on identifying barriers to HIV screening and creating community-based HIV prevention interventions.

In 2021, Carter served as a principal investigator for an Indiana Minority Health Coalition grant exploring the barriers to HIV services among minority populations in Indiana. He identified missed opportunities for people to be prescribed pre-exposure prophylaxis (also known as PrEP) to prevent HIV transmission from sex or injection drug use.

The drug, which received FDA approval in 2012, can reduce the risk of catching HIV by more than 90% when it’s taken daily, Carter said. But the people who could benefit most from the drug because they’re at higher risk for contracting HIV might not know it’s an option.

“When we talk to people of color, gay men and even people who inject drugs, we really see that the PrEP knowledge isn’t where we would like it to be,” Carter told IBJ. “And even when we are able to educate them on PrEP, we’re still dealing with the social stigma.”

Carter said it’s important to understand how well health care workers are doing at educating their patients and clients on PrEP to

evaluate policies within the health care setting to improve uptake.

Additionally, he's leading an initiative to try to eliminate Hepatitis C—an epidemic in Indiana—using community-based efforts. The community-based participatory research project, which is funded by IU's Center for Rural Engagement, is studying awareness, knowledge and attitudes about Hepatitis C among people who inject drugs, with a focus on improving treatment access.

The results should help Carter and his students understand where that population feels comfortable receiving health care—he's assuming, based on past research, it won't be the traditional health care setting.

Carter said he's passionate about his work in part because of his own experiences growing up as a gay boy in rural Indiana. He was coming of age as Indiana native Ryan White was battling an AIDS diagnosis (not only the illness but also discrimination related to the illness).

“From a child's eyes, those were really scary discussions,” he said. “I remember seeing and just feeling so bad for what was happening to Ryan and how he was treated, and it just made a huge impression on me.”•

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