# VSU grant focuses on HIV education, prevention efforts

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CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has awarded Virginia State University's department of psychology a two-year $200,000 grant to conduct an HIV health services research project. The project is designed to research and design an education prevention effort eliminating health disparities among African Americans over the age 50.

This grant is the only project currently funded as part of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities geared toward funding solutions to health issues that significantly impact African Americans. The unique expertise, knowledge, reputation and sensitivity that HBCU researchers can bring to the design, implementation and operation of such research are key to advancing the national, state, and local agenda of eliminating health disparities.

"The goal of the project is to engage Richmond and Petersburg faith-based and civic organizations in outreach and awareness activities that will allow us to measure the capacity of HIV education and intervention efforts for African American populations over age 50," said John E. Fife, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, who will serve as principal investigator. "The project also will assist in fostering communication and collaboration between VSU and the community regarding African American health disparity issues."

The department of psychology is part of VSU's School of Engineering, Science and Technology. The funding for this award will help VSU compete for future grants from the Department of Health and Human Services and CMS, as well as improve the capacity to encourage overall public sector, private sector and community involvement with the university.