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Wolfgang Dillmann
University of California, San Diego
Chair of the Department of Medicine
9500 Gilman Drive # 0671
La Jolla, CA 92093-0671

Re: Appointment of _____

Dear Dr. Dillmann,

I am delighted to support the faculty appointment of _____ as Assistant Adjunct Professor, Step II, _____ 2012, in the Division of Global Public Health.

_____’s academic background makes him uniquely qualified to fill this position. _____ received his undergraduate training in History and Sociology from Curtin University, Perth Australia, receiving First Class Honors for his Honors Dissertation in sociology on the impact of changes to governmental funding structures on the provision of services to youth. _____ was hired immediately on graduation to conduct qualitative research with people who inject drugs for the Australian National Drug Research Institute, and later worked for the Western Australian Alcohol and Drug Authority, a state government agency, to develop interventions derived from his earlier research work. In 2000, _____ moved to the United States, and was employed as a project director on a study of hepatitis C transmission among young injecting drug users at the University of California, San Francisco. _____ pursued his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Medical Sociology at UCSF, combining his field work with his existing employment at UCSF. His dissertation traced how past and current judicial status, locations of key resources, ethnic identity, and the ways young people made money shaped their ability to access HIV prevention services.

In September 2009 after completing his PhD, _____ joined the UCSD, Division of Global Public Health as a Postdoctoral Fellow. She has since immersed herself in studying the unique HIV risks experienced by substance using populations in San Diego, CA and the Mexico-U.S. border region. _____ is an embodiment of the kind of interdisciplinary public health scholarship we strive to advance in the Division. Moreover, as

someone who brought with him over a decade of experience conducting research and public health interventions among people who inject drugs, _____ has both the practical experience and the training in research methods to become a top tier HIV prevention researcher. As you will see from the summary below, _____ has been a leader in research relating to the reduction of harms associated with injecting drug use, with specific focus on opioid-related overdose. His productivity and passion for the integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods to his research, as well as his extensive contacts among the communities his research engages make his an exceptional recruit for our Division. I have full confidence that his unique background, experience, and skills will advance the Division's productivity, impact, and prestige.

_____ research focuses on harms associated with injecting drug use, including but not limited to HIV, hepatitis C, STIs, and opioid-related overdose. To date, she has published twenty one papers or book chapters in scientific and medical journals, serving as first author on four. These papers have appeared in some of the most distinguished publications, including a first author publication in *Addiction* (impact factor 4.1). His first authored papers have been extremely well received: his paper on overdose patterns in San Francisco has been cited over 60 times, and his paper on witness responses to overdose has been cited over 40 times, and his overall h-score is 10. More recently, _____ has published on the ethics of conducting research with active drug users (forthcoming in the *American Journal of Public Health*) and, taking up the focus of our Division, barriers to obtaining sterile needles in Tijuana (forthcoming in the *International Journal of Drug Policy*).

_____ peer-reviewed research has also been presented at national and international conferences, including the American Public Health Association Conference, International Harm Reduction Association Conference, American Association of Geographers annual meeting, American Sociology Association annual meeting, and the National Harm Reduction Conference. _____ has served on a range of panels hosted by government and non-government bodies, ranging from the Australian National Coroner's Information System to the San Francisco Department of Public Health and the Los Angeles Overdose Taskforce. Through these presentations, Dr Davidson has shown the ability to foster the exchange of research ideas and generate future inquiry regarding policy and intervention development.

With respect to teaching, _____ has been an invited lecturer for FPM 270 ("Ethical issues conducting research with people who inject drugs") and co-taught a course on Urban Health Policy at San Francisco State University. Violence Research Seminar course at Johns Hopkins University. she has also made repeat presentations to nursing and medical students at UCSF on working with young people who inject drugs. These experiences are beneficial to and have important parallels to our division's training programs, in particular, the joint doctoral program in Public Health at UCSD and SDSU. As an Assistant Professor, we anticipate that _____ will provide mentorship for PhD students in the Joint Doctoral Program (JDP) in Public Health between UCSD and SDSU, and invited lectures in courses for the JDP students (e.g., MED 270, Cultural Perceptions about Health and Disease, and the JDP Doctoral Seminar), as well as develop and teach a course on Global Perspectives of Drug Policy Research for the joint doctoral program.

In terms of professional service, _____ is a reviewer for eight peer-reviewed journals, lending his expertise in HIV, HCV, STIs, substance use, overdose, and qualitative research. _____ also currently serves on the boards of two Californian needle

exchanges, and has been a grant reviewer for the CDC's recent development of an opioid overdose research program. Additionally, we expect _____ to join the curriculum committee for the proposed UC-wide master's in global health. In terms of community service, _____ has also been effective at serving the communities and populations his research engages in other ways. As examples, she chaired the board of the San Francisco Needle Exchange during a difficult period in which the exchange faced community and media opposition to a proposed change in location. _____ has also served on the board of a needle exchange in Berkeley, volunteered at a peer-run health clinic for sex workers in San Francisco, and since joining UCSD has volunteered time and expertise to organizations serving drug users and sex workers in both Los Angeles and San Diego, most recently joining the board of Clean Needles Now, a major regional service provider.

_____ has great potential as an independent investigator. _____ has a consistent track record of securing funding for public health research. His first successfully funded grant was a research grant with the Tides Foundation to investigate the use of medical examiner case files for public health research. _____ also obtained a highly competitive Doctoral Dissertation Support grant from the _____ University wide AIDS Research Program (UARP, now CHRP). _____ is also principal investigator on a newly funded four-year K01 study that will use a highly innovative mixed methods study design to characterize the _____ impact of daily activities on risks associated with drug injection among female sex workers who inject drugs in Tijuana.

Over the next two to three years, I anticipate that _____ will continue to be highly productive in terms of academic achievement, service, and teaching. Specifically, through his K01 project, _____ will expand his already considerable methodological expertise by acquiring additional knowledge and skills in GIS methods, Spanish language, and the _____ conduct of HIV-related research in international settings. These skills will all help position _____ as an outstanding multidisciplinary sociologist. Supported by his sustained academic history, preliminary data _____ will collect through funded pilot studies and expertise of our Division in _____ specific areas of his interest, _____ will be well-positioned to lead an R34 or R01 submission by year three of _____ K01 award period, leading to independence.

We are delighted that _____ has decided to embark on _____ journey to become an independent investigator at UCSD. _____ is a dedicated, meticulous, and extremely intelligent researcher who will make substantial contributions to the field of HIV prevention. For these reasons, I give his appointment my full and enthusiastic support.

Sincerely,



Steffanie Strathdee, PhD,
Professor and Harold Simon Chair,
Chief, Division of Global Public Health