

Carolina Public Health

SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH • The UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL • SPRING 2004

Researchers visit NC classrooms to gauge dental health of state's youngsters

School of Public Health researchers are collaborating with officials in the state's Division of Public Health in conducting a systematic dental examination of 8,000 children in 400 North Carolina classrooms.

The goal? To assess the oral health of North Carolina children in kindergarten through grade 12 while evaluating the effectiveness of the state's preventive dentistry program. The state's oral health education/prevention programs include classroom activities such as oral health instruction, dental assessments and referrals for care and dental sealants, and community-based activities such as water fluoridation.

Known as the North Carolina Oral Health Survey, the work is one of several such epidemiological surveys in which the School of Public Health has provided assistance to the Oral Health Section of the Division of Public Health, a unit of the North Carolina

Department of Health and Human Services. Researchers from the School helped with a statewide school-based survey in 1986-87 and with statewide household surveys in 1976-77 and 1960-62.

"Ideas about tooth decay and how to intervene have changed over the years," said Dr. Gary Rozier, a professor of health policy and administration in the School and a principal investigator for the survey, which is funded by a grant from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

"We used to just look at the consequences of the disease by counting holes in teeth and whether the tooth had been treated with a filling or pulled," he said. "Now we see disease as a process where early stages are treatable with non-invasive preventive services, provided they

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Dr. C. Jean Spratt, a public health dentist supervisor for the Oral Health Section, examines the teeth of Brittany Bellanger, an eighth-grade student at C.W. Stanford Middle School in Hillsborough.

Nation's first female CDC director to speak at School of Public Health commencement

Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will deliver the commencement address for the School of Public Health's



Dr. Julie Gerberding

commencement ceremony on May 9, at 3 p.m. in the Dean E. Smith Center.

The first female to head the CDC, Gerberding is considered an expert in infection control and became a

prominent candidate to direct the organization following her influential leadership during the anthrax attacks in 2001.

At the time, she was acting deputy director of the National Center for Infectious Diseases, a unit of the CDC. In addition to heading the CDC, Gerberding presently serves as the administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, based at the CDC.

"Dr. Gerberding's impressive career sets an example of the way that strong leadership, coupled with a keen understanding of emerging public health issues, can make a differ-

ence in people's lives," said Interim Dean Margaret Dardess, who will preside over the School's commencement ceremony. "We are honored to have her speak at our commencement."

A South Dakota native, Gerberding joined the CDC in 1998 as director of the Hospital Infections Program — now the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion. There, she helped develop patient safety initiatives and other programs to prevent infections, antimicrobial resistance, and medical errors in

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Meet Margaret Dardess

Margaret B. Dardess, PhD, JD, became interim dean in March 2004, having first come to the School of Public Health in January 2002 as associate dean for administration and adjunct professor of health policy and administration. Prior to that, Dr. Dardess worked at GlaxoSmithKline for 15 years in various capacities, including senior counsel in the legal department, senior vice president of corporate affairs, and member of the Board of Directors.

Dr. Dardess is chair of the North Carolina Board of Science and Technology and a member of the North Carolina Economic Development Board, President of the GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, and member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Child and Family Health. In addition to serving on these and numerous other boards, she is visiting professor of the Practice at the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Connecticut College, master's and doctoral degrees from Columbia University and a JD from the University of Kansas School of Law.

During the time since the last issue of *Carolina Public Health* was published, the School of Public Health has undergone many transitions. The most dramatic of these, of course, is Bill Roper's move across Columbia Street to assume the responsibilities of a new position. Effective March 15, 2004, Bill succeeded Dr. Jeffrey L. Houpt as dean of the School of Medicine, CEO of the University Health Care System and Vice Chancellor of Medical Affairs.



Bill leaves behind a legacy that includes a world-renowned faculty whose teaching and research have made us the top-ranked public school of public health in the nation, tied with Harvard for the second spot overall in the *US News and World Report's* survey of all schools of public health, and a \$38 million research center that will open in early 2005 to provide laboratory and office space for faculty and staff. It is his hope — and ours — that his new position will create further opportunity for collaboration between the Schools of Public Health and Medicine and will foster new ways by which the public's health can be protected and its causes advanced.

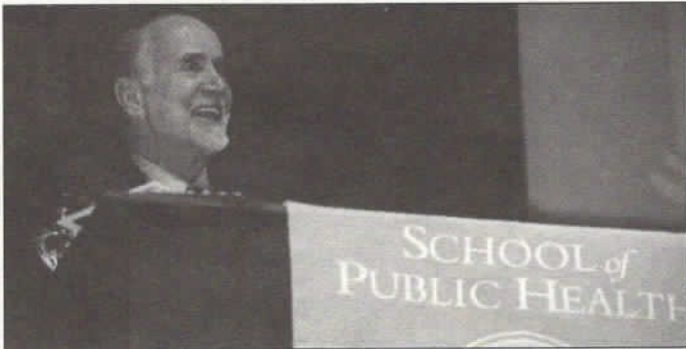
This issue of the newsletter describes some of the research in which our faculty have been involved — findings that suggest estrogen and progesterone together can decrease the risk of colon cancer in some women, that folic acid intake is critical for embryonic brain development and healthy brain growth late in pregnancy, that more work needs to be done to increase the survival rates for African-American men treated for prostate cancer.

We look forward to the May commencement, the culmination of the hard work and dedication of our undergraduate and graduate students, and are honored that Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will deliver the Commencement address.

As interim dean, I personally appreciate the support of faculty and staff as I take on new responsibilities, and I am committed to advancing the School's mission in research, teaching and service. The search to fill the position permanently is well underway, ably led by Committee Chair Dr. William Campbell, former dean of the School of Pharmacy, and will include national and possibly international candidates. We look forward to the exciting transitions here at the School of Public Health as we build on the leadership and collaborative efforts of Dean Roper and look toward a future when obesity, stroke, HIV/AIDS, SARS, bioterrorism, and other threats to global health and well-being no longer cry out so urgently to be addressed. It is within our means to make such change happen; let us take the challenge and act toward that end.

Margaret B. Dardess

School's Foard lecture focuses on global fight against AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria



Dr. Richard Feachem

Dr. Richard Feachem, executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, keyed the School's Fred T. Foard Jr. Memorial Lecture on April 8, focusing his talk on interventions and resources necessary to battle these diseases globally.

AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis together kill more than 6 million people annually worldwide.

"We're walking backwards in the face of these three pandemics," Feachem said.

"Malaria is the cause of nearly a quarter of childhood deaths in many African countries. Tuberculosis is one of the world's leading

infectious causes of death among young people and adults. And HIV/AIDS is the greatest disaster in recorded human history. It is worse than the Black Plague. Even if we did everything right in the next few

years, HIV/AIDS would still get much worse before it peaked and began to decline. Clearly we need to do more to fight these pandemics."

The lecture, titled "Fighting the Great Pandemics: Leadership, Technology, Money and Research," drew a crowd of nearly 250 including researchers and public health professionals from across the region and Carolina faculty, staff and students. The event was held at UNC's William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education.

A British national, Feachem has worked in international health and development for 30

years and has published extensively on public health and health policy. He is the first executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a Geneva-based non-governmental organization established in 2001 to increase resources to fight these three diseases.

The Fred T. Foard Jr. Memorial Lecture was established in 1969 by Dr. Fred Foard's widow, Elsie D. Foard, to honor her husband's work as a public health practitioner. His career spanned more than a half-century, much of it with the US Public Health Service, and ended as director of the division of epidemiology for the North Carolina Board of Health.

More information on the School's global efforts may be obtained at the Office of Global Health Web site at www.sph.unc.edu/ogh.

Certificate program prepares students for international public health careers

The School's Office of Global Health has developed a new certificate program to prepare graduate students for international public health challenges.

The new program gives students a specialty in global health to go along with their degree program and is open to students enrolled in a graduate degree program at the School. Students enrolled in other UNC graduate degree programs also may apply for consideration.

For more information, e-mail the Office of Global Health at ogh@unc.edu or visit www.sph.unc.edu/ogh.

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healthcare settings.

Gerberding is also credited with conducting pioneering studies on HIV infections and healthcare workers and creating guidelines for the prevention of such infections.

The CDC director will speak to more than 300 graduates in her keynote address at the School's commencement. Bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees will be conferred at the ceremony, which will include graduates who completed their studies this spring as

well as graduates who finished their studies in December 2003 or anticipate completing their studies in August, 2004.

A School of Public Health reception for graduates and their guests will follow the commencement ceremony in the courtyards between Rosenau and McGavran-Greenberg Halls.

For additional commencement information, visit www.sph.unc.edu/students or www.unc.edu/commencement.

WHO's Peterson Tapped to Lead Maternal and Child Health

Dr. Herbert B. Peterson, a medical officer with the Geneva-based World Health Organization (WHO), has been named the new chair of the School of Public Health's department of maternal and child health. His first day is July 6.



Bert Peterson

During his tenure at WHO, Peterson worked in the department of reproductive health and research and was responsible for coordinating the organization's family planning research and programs.

"Peterson brings an impressive mix of public health knowledge and experience to the position," said Dr. Margaret Dardess, the School's interim dean. "We are extremely pleased that he is joining us."

Before going to Geneva, Peterson was with the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta where he served as the first chief of the Women's Health and Fertility Branch in the Division of Reproductive Health from the branch's inception in 1989 until joining WHO in 1999.

A 1977 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine, Peterson completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the UNC School of Medicine. He also trained in epidemiology as an epidemic intelligence service officer at the CDC from 1979-1981.

Certified by both the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the American Board of Preventive Medicine, Peterson is a clinical professor in the medical schools at Emory University and UNC.

Leaders tackle road safety issues in Public Health Grand Rounds

More than one million people worldwide — including nearly 43,000 Americans — are killed each year as a result of a preventable public health problem: traffic crashes.

Averting such fatalities and related motor-vehicle injuries was the subject of this spring's Public Health Grand Rounds series sponsored by the UNC School of Public Health in partnership with the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"Communities must work together to address this serious public health issue," said Dr. Doug Robertson, director of the UNC Highway Safety Research Center and research associate professor in the School of Public Health's department of health behavior and health education.

Robertson served on the panel of the Public Health Grand Rounds, which was broadcast live nationwide via satellite and webcast on March 26 from the CDC in Atlanta and the UNC School of

Journalism and Mass Communication in Chapel Hill. Viewers at 217 sites in 41 states watched the event via satellite downlink, including individuals in health departments, government agencies and educational centers. Hundreds more viewed the event via webcast.

Following the hour-long broadcast, a panel of local experts explored strategies to improve road safety with viewers who had watched the broadcast from the satellite site in Rosenau Auditorium on the Carolina campus.

Titled "On the Road Again: Promoting Safe Travel and the Public Health," the grand rounds broadcast featured the efforts of the San Francisco Department of Public Health and community partners in making road safety a community priority.

The next Public Health Grand Rounds, scheduled for May 21, will focus on strategies for preventing tobacco use. For more details and to register, visit www.publichealthgrandrounds.unc.edu.



Bill Roper and Doug Robertson, director of the UNC Highway Safety Research Center and research associate professor in the School's department of health behavior and health education, prepare to go live from Chapel Hill for the March 26 Public Health Grand Rounds titled "On the Road Again: Promoting Safe Travel and the Public Health."

LISA KATZ

Students profit from School's career day events

The School has taken some of the mystery out of job hunting for master's and doctoral students this spring semester by sponsoring three career-related events.

Nearly 50 organizations turned out for the School's fourth annual career fair in March. The event drew representatives from leading local and national health organizations. Kiosks were set up highlighting internship, fellowship, community service and job opportunities. More than 400 attended including students from the School and other UNC departments and schools, alumni, staff, visitors from other universities, and representatives from health corporations and organizations, and state and federal agencies.

The departments of health behavior and health education and maternal and child health also sponsored "career information day" events.

The events — each of which drew about 30 students and 10 alumni — were designed to provide job-hunting and interviewing tips, advice on resume construction and opportunities to network. Roundtable discussions where alumni talked about the specifics of their job and how they got there were a component of each gathering.

"Career Information Day was a nice way to visit with some old friends, make new ones, and hopefully, pass on some career-search pearls of wisdom to our new public health colleagues," said Heather Altman, who earned her master's degree in health behavior and health education in 1999 and is now director of well-being at the Carol Woods Retirement Community in Chapel Hill.



PHOTOS BY LISA KATZ



Students speak with representatives from local and national health organizations to learn about post-graduation career opportunities at the School's fourth annual career fair held in March.

Women's Health Research Day honors efforts of School's stars

Carolina professors, researchers, graduate students and alumni — including many from the School of Public Health — presented cutting-edge research findings related to women's health at the fifth-annual Women's Health Research Day on March 17. The day-long event was sponsored by the UNC Center for Women's Health Research, a collaborative program of the schools of Public Health and Medicine and the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research.

The day covered an array of research topics related to public health, social work, psychiatry, surgery, and obstetrics and gynecology among others. Presenters representing other UNC campuses and governmental and non-governmental research organizations also participated. Some 300 researchers, faculty,

students, and alumni attended.

Three School of Public Health researchers were honored at the conference for exemplary work related to women's health and healthcare. Award amounts ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and support further research and professional activities. Honorees were:

Laura Gaydos, who will receive her doctorate from the School this May in health policy and administration, was recognized with the McMahon Young Investigator Award for her presentation on factors influencing the creation of contraceptive equity laws. The award, given to a young investigator whose work demonstrates great promise for leadership in advancing women's health through research, is in memory of Dr. Michael J. McMahon.

Dr. Sandra Martin, professor in the School's department of maternal and child health, and Dr. Susan Parish, assistant professor in UNC's School of Social Work, were jointly honored with the Judges' Award for their work in disabled women's health care access. The award recognizes research in the field of women's disabilities.

Dr. Anna Maria Siega-Riz, associate professor in the School's departments of nutrition and maternal and child health, was recognized with the Center for Women's Health Research Award of Excellence for her research on the relationship between a high glycemic load diet and the risk of developing gestational diabetes.

Roper takes on new challenges, vows to continue collaboration with School

After leading Carolina's School of Public Health for six and a half years, Bill Roper crossed Columbia Street on March 15 and began his new tenure as dean of the UNC School of Medicine, vice chancellor for Medical Affairs, and CEO of the UNC Health Care System.

When he arrived in August 1997, Roper was seen as a well-seasoned leader who capably could bring the School of Public Health into the 21st century. He has been widely praised for his leadership of the School.

Although this was his first position in academia, Roper brought years of public health experience to the job. He had served as senior vice president of Prudential HealthCare, headed the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and the federal Health Care Financing Administration, served in several positions on the White House staff under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, and taken on county- and state-level public health positions in his native Alabama as a young graduate of the University of Alabama's School of Medicine.

Still, if anyone wondered how Roper would fare in this new foreign territory of academia, they needn't have.

Under Roper's leadership, the School gained in the *US News and World Report* rankings, most recently in 2003 being named the top school of public health at a state university, tied with Harvard for second place overall. Sponsored research funding rose as well, up to \$58.2 million

in 2003. During a period when state budget cuts severely stressed the University, Roper also successfully shepherded the addition of outstanding faculty to the School.

During his tenure, Carolina faculty, staff and students came to value Roper for his far-reaching understanding of the School's workings, his innate ability to bring out the best in people, and his ability to advocate effectively for the School whether with university administration, the state legislature, the media, or other outside interests.

"Bill has accomplished much because he is a remarkable facilitator of ideas — always responsive to people's needs to express their opinions, yet simultaneously keeping a helpful control over the debate," said Dr. Jo Anne Earp, professor and chair of the

department of health behavior and health education, and a member of the search committee that brought Roper to Carolina.

Roper said he learned on the job about the complexities of the academic endeavor, but added that he found many similarities between the leadership skills needed for academia and those needed in private or government sectors.

"I believe the same rules of leadership apply — bring people together to chart a future, discuss common goals, and choose which ones to pursue," he said. "Then, with single-mindedness, set about achieving those goals."



Public Health student leaders from the School (above), with Bill Roper and Donna Shalala, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, during Shalala's 1999 visit to the School. Roper (above, right) at a March dinner held in his honor. Roper visits with the architects (right) at the May 2002 groundbreaking ceremony for the School's new research center.



It was Roper's ability to bring people together that helped facilitate the development of the UNC Program on Ethnicity, Culture and Health Outcomes (ECHO) in late 2001 with a core grant of \$1.4 million from the GlaxoSmithKline Foundation. At that time, Roper and Dr. Jeff Houpt, then dean of the School of Medicine, issued a university-wide announcement of a meeting to discuss the creation of this ambitious initiative. Campus support was overwhelming, with more than 100 faculty members participating in the initial organizational meeting. The program, now a campuswide effort involving faculty, staff, and students from a multitude of schools and centers, facilitates the conduct of translatable, evidence-based research aimed at identifying the causes of health care disparities.

Roper's concern about how to measure health outcomes and ensure that the best preventive and treatment methods are recognized and rewarded encouraged his founding, in September 1998, another key campuswide initiative: the UNC Program on Health Outcomes (PHO). PHO recently received \$225,000 in funding from Pfizer to support the program's seminar series and Summer Outcomes Day events.

It was also under Roper's leadership that the North Carolina Institute for Public Health — the School's service arm — grew from an assemblage of discrete units into an integrated, vital center with the goal of translating School research findings into practical applications for health care and public health organizations.



School's new research center 60 percent complete, construction continues both inside and out

Students, faculty and staff walking by the construction site of the School's new 125,000-square-foot research center this spring and summer will notice construction workers laying the building's brick and limestone exterior. The west side of the building by the Baity Lab will receive the first bricks.

The \$38.6 million project — which will include 30 modern labs for the departments of epidemiology, environmental sciences and engineering, and nutrition — is now 60 percent complete. The building is scheduled to open in the spring of 2005.

This spring and summer, workers will be hanging interior dry wall, installing interior moveable walls to separate labs, putting in three-story exterior window frames, enclosing the research center's multi-story atrium, connecting Rosenau Hall to the new research center via entrances on the first and second floors, and constructing the

front plaza of the new building.

The research center's front entrance will feature a wrap-around terrace connecting with Rosenau Hall's existing outdoor plaza. The brick-paved terrace will overlook a sloping, landscaped front lawn and will include seating areas.

All exterior utilities associated with the new building, with the exception of water, have been completed. A new electrical duct bank and transformer on the building's west side are complete, as are the sanitary sewer and gas tie-ins. And the building's air-handling units — massive structures the size of subway cars — have been installed and tested.

To learn more about the research center, visit: www.sph.unc.edu/about/build. To make a gift towards the building, please contact Charlotte Parks at 919-966-7612 or charlotte_parks@unc.edu.

One of the things Roper said he is proudest of is "the rich collaboration we have had between the School of Public Health and the School of Medicine."

"This is a collaboration that precedes me of course," Roper noted. "But having spent six and a half years here in the School of Public Health, I hope to be able to promote ever-stronger bridges across Columbia Street in my new position."

While proud of the School's accomplishments, Roper is modest about taking

credit for them. Rather, he says, he helped give direction to excellence he found at the School upon his arrival and brought in or supported people who could carry that excellence to the next level.

"I'd like to be remembered as somebody who came here and got people who were already doing great things to aspire to even greater levels of attainment," he said. "I truly believe we have done that."

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are available. Fluoride rinses or fluoridated toothpaste, for instance, can heal teeth in the early stages of dental disease when the enamel has become soft due to calcium and phosphorus leaching. Using a fluoride rinse has the same effect on a tooth as putting antibiotics on a skin infection. It gets better without having to surgically intervene."

These changes in viewpoint have resulted in changes in data collection for the statewide survey that Rozier and others in the School are helping to design, conduct and evaluate.

Important goals for this particular survey are to create standardized indicators of early dental disease and to develop a baseline of how many children have early disease that could be preventively treated. Teeth with signs of early disease often have white spots near the gum line or other susceptible parts of the tooth.

Researchers also hope to obtain baseline data on the oral health of North Carolina's school-age Hispanic population.

"There have been a large number of socio-demographic changes in North Carolina over the last decade and we want to find out how these have affected dental disease in the state," Rozier said. "We suspect that this survey will find a very polarized situation because of disparities in access to care and services."

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease and is becoming increasingly concentrated in smaller segments of the population.

According to studies conducted by the National Institutes of Health, 80 percent of dental disease is found in just 20 percent of children. The National Maternal and Child Health Resource Center estimates that 51 million school hours are lost each year because of dental-related illnesses, and children from fami-

lies with low incomes miss nearly 12 times as many school days because of dental problems as children from families with higher incomes.

In its efforts to gauge the success of the state's education/preventive dentistry program, the survey is sampling children who have participated in the program as well as those who have not. Six public health dentists have been surveying the teeth of North Carolina schoolchildren since November and are expected to complete the surveys by the end of May.

"For every child in the survey, we're looking at every tooth and coding its status," said Dr. C. Jean Spratt, a public health dentist supervisor for the Oral Health Section. "We note whether a

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease and is becoming increasingly concentrated in smaller segments of the population.

particular tooth is present, and if so if it is a baby tooth or a permanent tooth, and whether there's a cavity, a crown or other restoration, or sealant. We also look for braces, history of trauma (i.e. chipped teeth), and use an index to evaluate exposure to fluoride."

Children are asked to fill out questionnaires with questions about whether or how often they've ever had difficulty biting or chewing, had bleeding gums or sores in their mouth, had food stuck in or between their teeth, had trouble sleeping, or had difficulty paying attention in school.

Parents of surveyed children also are asked to complete questionnaires with questions about dental injuries their children may have sustained, the water source for the household (bottled, spring, well, or city/community systems), exposure to fluoride products, and general dental care received.

Questionnaire data later will be paired with data from the oral exams to help researchers gain a broader understanding of the effectiveness of the program. The last step in the survey will be the convening of an expert panel to review the research results and decide on the direction of the state's public health dental program.

"Our goal is to prevent dental disease in children and to educate the public about the importance of oral health to their overall health," said Dr. Rebecca King, head of Oral Epidemiology in the Oral Health Section and an alumna of the School. "This survey will help us measure disparities in dental health so that we can make the best use of our limited resources."

Many in the School of Public Health have contributed to the success of this endeavor. Dr. William Kalsbeek, a biostatistics professor, and Dr. J. Michael Bowling, a health behavior and health education research assistant professor, oversaw the team tasked with creating the sample design for the survey.

And post-doctoral trainee, Dr. Jayanker Valiyaparambil will receive an award for his work on this project from the American Association of Public Health Dentistry to be given at the National Oral Health Conference in Los Angeles this May.

Valiyaparambil pilot-tested selected survey methods including the questionnaires. He holds a master in public health degree from the department of health policy and administration and in December completed a dental public health residency program jointly offered by the department and the Oral Health Section.

Your gift could make Kathy's lab a reality

Dr. Kathleen Conway-Dorsey is a research assistant professor of epidemiology in Carolina's School of Public Health and member of the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

She is one of Carolina's finest cancer researchers.

Since arriving in Chapel Hill in 1990, Conway-Dorsey's research has focused on molecular epidemiology, the molecular genetics of breast cancer, and the influence of cigarette smoking on the prevalence and spectrum of p53 mutations in breast tumors. She is among a team of distinguished researchers, clinicians, and public health specialists at Carolina working on the National Cancer Institute-funded Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) in Breast Cancer and the Carolina Breast Cancer Study, a population-based case-control study aimed at discovering new risk factors for breast cancer among women in 24 North Carolina counties.

In spring 2005, Conway-Dorsey will pack her lab equipment in 359 Rosenau Hall and move into a state-of-the-art laboratory on the third floor of the School's new 125,000-square-foot research center.

"Carolina's department of epidemiology will truly benefit from new laboratory space for infectious disease and cancer epidemiology research," she said.



Dr. Kathleen Conway-Dorsey

"The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is unique because of the large number of population-based cancer studies underway here," Conway-Dorsey continued. "We study different types of cancer and risk factors for cancer in North Carolina populations. As part of these studies, my lab evaluates genetic changes in tumors in an effort to determine if subsets of cancer characterized by these changes are associated with exposure to certain risk factors, such as smoking or sunlight exposure. Our new

state-of-the-art laboratory will enhance the work we are able to do."

To make the building a reality, the School is reaching out to new donors, leading organizations, and long-time friends who might consider making gifts to name labs honoring themselves, a loved one, or an admired professor. Conway-Dorsey's new lab is a special naming opportunity for a donor who believes in advancing cancer research and investing in the excellence of Carolina's department of epidemiology. With a generous gift of \$150,000, a donor's name would be displayed by Conway-Dorsey's lab forever.

"Cancer research can save lives," said Conway-Dorsey. "For years, there has been a wealth of population-based work at Carolina, and collaborations of many investigators working together to make a difference. I look forward to shaking the hand of the donor who makes a leadership gift to name my lab. I will let them know that their generosity made this cancer lab and building a reality."

The School's new research center is scheduled to open in the spring of 2005, and will showcase 30 modern labs for three departments: epidemiology, environmental sciences and engineering, and nutrition.

For more information on making a gift to name Kathy Conway-Dorsey's lab or another lab in the building, please contact Charlotte Parks at 919-966-7612 or charlotte_parks@unc.edu.

Generous gifts boost School's Carolina First Campaign totals

The School of Public Health gifts total topped \$62 million in April, positioning the School to hit the \$100 million goal by June 2007. That is the close of the University's \$1.8 billion campaign, which currently has \$1.2 billion in commitments and includes gifts from all schools and units. Whether gifts are directed toward scholarships, professorships, the new building, student travel, or the School of Public Health Foundation, they all count. Since the beginning of the campaign, the School has received funds to create 15 professorships, 30 scholarships and numerous programs. Additionally, \$5 million has been raised for the School's new research center. Help us make a difference. See enclosed envelope for details.

The power of two: mother and daughter honor each other with gifts to children's environmental health

In 1776, a London physician named Percival Pott noted a high incidence of cancer in young chimney sweeps – a discovery often cited as the first case of an environmentally-related disease in children. Since then, the list of environmental hazards and their debilitating outcomes has risen dramatically, thanks to the pioneering efforts of researchers like Carol Remmer Angle. A physician and professor of pediatrics at the University of Nebraska, she focused her 40-year career on the causes and effects of lead poisoning in children, her interest beginning in 1959 with a three-year-old who suffered from an acute swelling of the brain.

"A young boy died at our hospital in Omaha before the diagnosis of lead poisoning was even considered," Angle said. "We subsequently found not only whole families with lead poisoning –including his – but an entire elementary school. (It was located) next door to a battery reclamation."

Angle's work has garnered national recognition, but her most recent – and perhaps most satisfying – accolade came from her daughter, Marcia Angle, a physician and adjunct professor in the Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences at Duke University. Marcia, who serves on the UNC Public Health Foundation board, intended to make a significant gift to the

School of Public Health in honor of her mother; the announcement was to be made at a dinner given by James Swenberg, director of the Center for Environmental Health and Susceptibility, and his wife, Sandra. But by the end of the

Endowment Trust Fund.

"I was particularly gratified that everyone (at the dinner) was in a position to appreciate my mother's significant lifetime contributions to children's environmental health," Marcia said. "I feel sure the person chosen (for the professorship) will be in my mother's image: a rigorous and prolific scholar, a dedicated teacher and an active public health advocate."

In making her gift, Carol Angle praised the School of Public Health. "The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is recognized by all as preeminent in environmental research and public health," she said. "It is a privilege to help build on such a strong base."

The professorship will be used to attract or retain a distinguished teacher and scholar in the department of maternal and child health, the department of environmental sciences and engineering or the Center for Environmental Health and Susceptibility.

"I cannot think of a better way to honor Dr. Angle," said Swenberg.

"This endowment will keep her life's work fresh in perpetuity, while helping to attract, support and retain outstanding faculty in children's environmental health research at UNC."

For more information on making a gift to the School, please contact Martha Monnett at 919-966-0613 or martha_monnett@unc.edu.



Dr. Carol Remmer Angle with daughter, Marcia Angle.

evening, the Carol Remmer Angle Endowed Professorship in Children's Environmental Health at UNC-Chapel Hill was funded by both Marcia and Carol – bringing the gift to \$333,000 and making it eligible for a \$167,000 state match from the Distinguished Professors

New public health leadership fund to support interdisciplinary practice-based learning

Public health practitioners are ideal instructors for students seeking to develop strong public health leadership skills, believes Dr. Bill Sollecito, director of the School's Public Health Leadership Program.

"There are many people in public health who are out there working and doing a very good job," said Sollecito, also a research professor in the department of health policy and administration. "We need to bring them in and have them tell their leadership stories."

A gift to the School by Sollecito and his wife, Michele, will allow the Public Health Leadership Program to do just that.

In September, the couple donated \$200,000 and pledged an additional \$300,000 in the form of a charitable remainder gift to establish a fund to be used to support public health and health care practitioners' service as teaching faculty in adjunct, visiting, clinical or research appointments. "The William A. and Michele A. Sollecito Fund for the Promotion of Interdisciplinary Practice-Based Learning" also will support practice-based interdisciplinary distance education activities in the Public Health Leadership Program.

The former president of the Americas' Division of Quintiles Transnational feels passionately about the insights that practitioners have to offer students. That's because such interdisciplinary practice-based learning was instrumental to his own success.

With an undergraduate degree in business administration, a master's degree in biostatistics, and a doctorate in public health (from the School's biostatistics department), Sollecito's professional experience includes biostatistical positions with the Health Insurance Plan of New York and the New York City Department of Health.

But it was at Quintiles Transnational that Sollecito honed his management and leadership skills. He worked with the organization from its inception in the late 1970s as a small statistical and data-management consulting group composed of Carolina biostatistics professors and graduate students through its rise to a multi-million dollar international corporation.



Dr. Bill Sollecito, director of the School's Public Health Leadership Program and health policy and administration research professor, with his wife, Michele.

"Quintiles was like a leadership laboratory," he noted. "We had many leadership lessons... and as we grew, we very quickly learned that we had to teach ourselves to be good leaders and managers and to train others to be leaders. We all really had to learn on the job and from each other. It was very much a team approach."

So it was quite natural that when Sollecito came to Carolina to teach in 1997, he wanted to share this interdisciplinary practice-based learning approach with students. Creating an endowment to allow other practitioners to share their experiences was just the next step in the evolution of this idea of combining the lessons of practice with the academic strengths of the School.

Sollecito emphasizes that this gift to the School is from his entire family. Without the supportive environment created by his wife, Michele, and daughters, Maria, 18, and Rosalinda, 17, he says his professional success would not have been possible.

It was the gift of education, however, that made him want to give back to the School of Public Health.

"I recognize that my successes are built on the academic education I received in schools of public health, including Carolina" he said. "Because of this, I think it's important to help guarantee that these foundations will be there for other people as well."

Laws designed to prevent too-short hospital stays allow mothers more time, School study shows

State and federal laws passed in the mid-1990s to curtail “drive-through deliveries” — potentially dangerous, exceptionally short hospital stays for women giving birth — have partially succeeded in correcting that problem in some states, a School of Public Health study shows.

“In the decade before these laws, postpartum hospital stays were getting shorter and shorter, possibly because more people were covered by managed-care organizations that were trying to cut costs,” said Dr. Will Dow, assistant professor in the School’s department of health policy and administration. “Women were leaving hospitals less than 24 hours after vaginal deliveries.

“Starting in 1995, negative press reports began featuring so-called ‘drive-through deliveries,’ including stories about children who had died or had other bad outcomes maybe as a result,” Dow said.

Then, in 1995, some states began regulating the length of hospital stays after birth. In 1998, a federal law took effect that filled gaps in state drive-through delivery regulation efforts. Those laws generally required that most health insurance plans pay for at least a 48-hour stay after vaginal delivery and a 96-hour stay following

cesarean delivery.

A report on the impacts of the laws appears in the January issue of the *Journal of Health Economics*.

Using a national hospital discharge database and focusing on 18 states and one million hospital records, the researchers sought to determine if the state and federal laws had any impact on hospital discharge practices over time.

The study found that the change was significant. On average, before the legislation was passed, 55 percent of privately insured women spent one night or less following normal births. Afterward, on average, 39 percent of such women spent that little time in the hospital.

“We cannot say yet whether the longer stays contributed to better health outcomes for women since we were not able to measure that yet,” Dow said. “We suspect that if there are any health benefits that those benefits are small.”

A second major finding was that the effects varied from state to state, he said.

“In Maryland, for example, very little



Changes in hospital discharge regulations lead to mothers spending more time resting in the hospital following delivery.

changed once the first law was passed in 1995 in terms of length-of-stay patterns,” Dow said. “After a stricter law passed in 1996, however, that led to a very sharp decline in drive-through deliveries.”

On average, the longer stays boosted hospital charges by about \$200.

Study finds racial disparities in prostate cancer survival rates

Black men tend to have poorer overall survival rates than white men after being treated for localized prostate cancer, a new School study shows.

The findings also show the greatest disparity to be among men who undergo surgery.

Researchers found that among those who had surgery, the median survival time for black patients was 1.8 years less than for

white patients (10.8 years versus 12.6 years, respectively).

The differences in median survival times between black and white patients were smaller among patients treated with radiation therapy (.7 years) and among patients who had non-aggressive therapy, also called “watchful waiting” (1.0 years).

Several reasons could account for these disparities, researchers said. One is that black patients had reduced access to special-

ized radiation therapy, which is preferred over surgery for patients in whom locally advanced cancer is suspected. Another possible explanation is genetic differences between races in response to prostate cancer treatment.

Scientists from the School’s department of epidemiology, the School of Medicine and the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center joined researchers from the Medical Review of North Carolina and Massachusetts General Hospital in conducting this study.

Folic acid necessary in early and late pregnancy

In the past few years, folic acid has been the single greatest nutrition success story in preventing birth defects. Spina bifida, in which the spinal cord doesn't close, and anencephaly, a condition in which the brain doesn't form normally, can be eliminated between 50 and 85 percent of the time if women get sufficient folic acid before they become pregnant.

Researchers from the School's department of nutrition now have discovered that folic acid is not just critical for brain development in embryos during the earliest stages of pregnancy, but is also a key to healthy brain growth and function late in pregnancy, too.

Humans and other mammals lacking sufficient folic acid shortly before they are born can suffer lifelong brain impairment, animal studies conducted by School researchers indicate. Such research can never be done directly in growing human fetuses for obvious reasons, researchers agree.

The new study shows for the first time that having too little folic acid causes impaired development of areas of the brain important for memory and thinking. It is therefore extremely important that women not stop taking folic acid after the first weeks but continue until they give birth. Taking a supplement is wise since half of the women in this country are deficient in folic acid in their regular diet.

A report on the findings appeared in the January issue of *The Journal of Nutrition*.

Hormone use cuts postmenopausal women's colon cancer risk

In postmenopausal women, relatively short-term use of the hormones estrogen and progesterin appears to cut the risk of colorectal cancer, according to a new multi-center national study in which faculty from the School's departments of epidemiology and nutrition and the School of Medicine contributed.

Among the small percentage of women in the study who developed the cancer, however, those who took the combined hormone treat-

ment were diagnosed at a more advanced disease stage than those who took a placebo.

"These findings support wider implementation of bowel screening among postmenopausal women who are using hormone therapy," authors of a report on the study concluded. "Current data are insufficient to support the use of estrogen plus progesterin to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer in any population."

The report appeared in the March 4 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

Active, passive smoking boosts children's asthma

Children who sometimes smoke or are exposed to tobacco smoke at home or elsewhere suffer more asthma than their classmates, according to a School of Public Health survey — one of the largest ever conducted among North Carolina school children.

The survey found that childhood smoking and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke — "passive smoking" — were responsible for about 15 percent of asthma cases in the youngsters surveyed and resulted in an estimated \$1.34 million in excess medical costs.

This is the first time the correlation between children's smoking and asthma has been demonstrated.

Researchers from the School's department of epidemiology surveyed 192,248 North Carolina seventh- and eighth-graders participating in the North Carolina School Asthma Survey during the 1999-2000 school year.

Controlling for numerous factors such as other allergies and having gas stoves at home, the researchers' analysis showed that more than 17 percent of the children reported wheezing symptoms, and almost 10 percent reported physician-diagnosed asthma. They found a strong correlation between estimated exposure to tobacco smoke and symptoms the children said they suffered. Significant separate associations were found between asthma symptoms and both childhood cigarette smoking and environmental tobacco smoke.

A report on the findings appears in the February issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

WIC program reduces children's snacking

A School-led research team has found that preschoolers enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) show positive nutritional behaviors and intakes beyond the program's goals.

Using a nationally representative sample of the US population from 1994-98, collected by the US Department of Agriculture, the research team evaluated fat, fruit, vegetable and added sugar intake, as well as snacking behavior among WIC participants. The researchers determined the overall prevalence of snacking among preschoolers enrolled in WIC, a behavior linked to obesity, to be significantly lower than that of non-participants.

In addition, WIC participants whose family incomes were less than 130 percent of poverty (the cutoff used for the Food Stamp Program) experienced a beneficial effect on the intake of fat, carbohydrates, added sugar and fruit. Their diets were higher in the percentage of energy from carbohydrates and in the number of servings of fruits, and lower in the percentage of energy coming from fats and in the amount of added sugars.

Benefits among study participants with higher incomes — up to 185 percent of poverty — were limited to lower added sugar intakes and higher iron and fruit intakes. In both income groups, nutrient intake due to snacking showed a beneficial effect only on added sugar intake and suggested the same for iron and fruit intake.

The multi-center research team included faculty from the School's departments of nutrition and maternal and child health, and the Carolina Population Center.

The new study is published in the February issue of *The Journal of Pediatrics*.

Carolina Center for Public Service honors School's outreach initiatives

The Carolina Center for Public Service in April recognized eight individuals and organizations from across the Carolina campus for service to the state — including one individual and one organization from the School.

David Edwards, an epidemiology master's student from Albuquerque, NM, who will graduate this August, was honored with the Robert E. Bryan Public Service Award for his work with mothers and children at the Carolina Children's Clinic in Raleigh's Salvation Army Shelter over the past several years. This past year, Edwards, also a third-year medical school student at Duke University, working with Sarah Przybyla, a first-year health behavior and health education doctoral student at Carolina, brought together pre-medical and nursing students, and other prospective future health-care professionals from throughout the Triangle to provide health-education services to mothers and children.

The NC Institute for Public Health was awarded an Office of the Provost Public Service Award. The Institute was honored for its Management Academy for Public Health, a partnership between the School of Public Health and UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School. Faculty from both schools have worked together to develop customized courses for public health managers to improve the effectiveness of public health organizations. Since its inception in 1999, the academy has enrolled more than 700 managers in its nine-month training program. The curriculum promotes individual career development and requires teams and partnerships to address health priorities in participants' home communities.



Pamela Santos, a coach for the Management Academy for Public Health (left); Jackie Molver, program assistant for the Academy (center); and Dr. Stephen Orton, the Academy's program manager (right).

Four named to distinguished professorships in 2003

Gifts to the School and University are recognizing excellence in teaching and research in the School through the naming of four new distinguished professorships in 2003.

They join six School of Public Health faculty counterparts who already hold the distinguished professor designation.

Following are the distinguished professorship designees from public health approved by the University's Board of Trustees during 2003:

Dr. Barbara K. Rimer, professor, department of health behavior and health education, as Alumni Distinguished Professor. Rimer's research interests include informed decision making, long-term maintenance of behavior changes, interventions to increase adherence to cancer screening and use of new technologies for behavior change.

Dr. David Savitz, professor and chairman, department of epidemiology, as Cary C. Boshamer Distinguished Professor. Savitz's research interests include reproductive, environmental and cancer epidemiology.

Dr. Robert Wetzel, professor, department of environmental sciences and engineering, as William R. Kenan Jr. Professor. Wetzel's research interests include physiology and ecology of algae and higher aquatic plants, biogeochemical cycling in freshwater ecosystems, functional roles of organic compounds and detritus in aquatic ecosystems.

Dr. Steven Zeisel, professor and chairman, department of nutrition (jointly housed in the schools of Public Health and Medicine), as American Institute for Cancer Research - World Cancer Research Fund Distinguished Term Professor in Food, Nutrition and Prevention of Cancer through Sept. 30, 2006. Zeisel's research interests include brain development, cancer, and nutrition.

A key goal of the University's Carolina First campaign is to create 200 new endowed professorships. Including the most recent designations, the University has created 111 thus far in the campaign. Carolina First is a comprehensive, multi-year private fund-raising campaign to support Carolina's vision of becoming the nation's leading public university.

Physician-executive graduate program named best in nation

Modern Physician magazine recently named the School's Executive Master's Program the nation's top graduate business program for physician-executives.

Based in the School's department of health policy and administration, the Executive Master's Program has provided graduate-level education to employed health professionals and health administrators for more than 34 years.

"Educating physician-executives as part of a team of future leaders and managers for health care is a critical priority for us to move forward in improving quality and patient safety," said Dr. Peggy Leatt, department chair.

The program prepares mid-career professionals to assume leadership positions in health-care organizations, and focuses on

developing managerial and analytical skills and fostering an understanding of the major forces that shape health-care systems.

The rankings of graduate business programs for physician-executives appeared in the magazine's November 2003 issue. They are based on four factors: cost of tuition; number of days students must spend on campus; number of years the program has been in existence; and the number of students who have graduated from the program since its inception.



Achievements & Awards

Ammerman to lead Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Dr. Alice Ammerman, associate professor of nutrition in the Schools of Public Health and Medicine, has been appointed director of the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. The appointment became effective January 15.

She replaces Dr. Alan Cross, who led the Center for 12 years. Cross is a clinical professor in the School's department of maternal and child health and a professor of social medicine and pediatrics in the medical school.

Ammerman has been affiliated with the Center since 1985 when she began her doctoral training in nutrition at Carolina. For the past five years, she has served on the Center's scientific advisory committee.

Her active research program focuses on health promotion issues, with a particular focus on health disparities and the prevention of chronic disease through nutrition and physical activity interventions in underserved populations.

Okun honored for decades of service to those in need of safe water

Dr. Daniel Okun, Kenan professor of environmental engineering emeritus in the School's department of environmental sciences and engineering, was honored recently by WaterPartners International, for his "decades of service to those in need of safe water throughout the world" and for his contributions to water treatment, watershed protections and water reclamation and reuse. WaterPartners International is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing clean drinking water to developing country communities.

Okun — a founding WaterPartners board member and one of the world's most respected environmental engineers whose work has influenced such organizations as the World Bank, the United Nations and the World Health Organization — was honored at the WaterPartners International's 12th annual Water for Life fundraiser in February.

WaterPartners International was founded by Gary White and Marla Smith-Nilson, who received their master of science degrees from the School in environmental sciences and engineering respectively. Founded in 1990, WaterPartners has launched more than 50 water supply and sanitation projects in developing countries — all of them still in operation.

Francisco receives new award named in his honor

Dr. Donald E. Francisco, clinical professor in the School's department of environmental sciences and engineering, has received an award named in his honor by the American Water Works Association's North Carolina section and the North Carolina Water Environment Association.

A UNC faculty member since 1973, Francisco, in November, received the Donald E. Francisco Educator of the Year Award, which honors association members for outstanding service to the association and to the industry through education and training of water and wastewater professionals.

Nutrition student one of five in nation to win fellowship

Lei Li, a doctoral student in the School's department of nutrition, is one of five national winners to receive a Wyeth Consumer Healthcare Predoctoral Fellowship for 2004 from the American Society for Nutritional Science (ASNS). The award is given to students who Wyeth considers to be "potential future nutritional scientists."

She garnered the \$5,000 award on the basis of her proposed project: "Function and regulation of acyl-CoA synthetases in fatty acid partitioning."

Li collected her award at an ASNS awards ceremony held in conjunction with the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology conference in Washington, DC, on April 18.

DiGiano honored for distinguished service to water supply field

Dr. Francis A. DiGiano, a professor in the School's department of environmental sciences and engineering, this fall received the George Warren Fuller Award, presented by the state section of the American Water Works Association.

The award, established in 1937 and the most prestigious presented by the North Carolina section, is given each year to an individual with distinguished service in the water supply field.

DiGiano will also be recognized in June at an American Water Works Association awards ceremony in Orlando, Fla.

A UNC faculty member since 1981, DiGiano's research has focused on water and wastewater treatment technology, with an emphasis on using absorption and membrane technologies in removing organic contaminants from drinking water.

Nutrition's Hackney serves as Fulbright Scholar in Krakow

Dr. Anthony Hackney, a professor of nutrition, is one of four Carolina faculty members serving abroad as a Fulbright Scholar during the current academic year.

Since November, he has been shuttling between Chapel Hill and the Institute of Public Health at the Medical College of Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, while developing curriculum and joint research on obesity, diet and physical inactivity. Hackney is presenting research seminars focused on personal research dealing with physiological and endocrine responses in humans to stress. His scholarship term will conclude in May. Hackney also is a professor of exercise and sport science in the College of Arts and Sciences.

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Three specialty programs garner high marks in latest *US News* rankings

It doesn't take an engineering school to make a great engineering program. As the newly released 2005 *US News and World Report* rankings reveal, one of the nation's top-five environmental/environmental health engineering programs is actually in a school of public health — ours.

A specialty program of the School's highly-regarded department of environmental sciences and engineering, environmental/environmental health engineering this year moved from tenth place to fifth place nationally. Of the nation's more than 200 such programs, Carolina's remains the only top-10 program not in an engineering school.

And that is not the only recognition received by environmental sciences and engineering. The new rankings place the department's environmental policy and management specialty in tenth place nationally.

The department of health policy and administration also garnered a fresh accolade. The department's specialty in health policy and management tied for ninth place with Duke and

Syracuse universities in the new rankings.

This recognition joins the second-place ranking of the department's health services administration specialty from the magazine's 2004 graduate rankings edition, published in April 2003.

"We are delighted that the programs at the School continue to be acknowledged as the finest in the nation," said Dr. Margaret Dardess, the School's interim dean. "A world-class faculty, a group of students who are among the nation's best and brightest, and alumni whose achievements are renowned in the field — these are the elements that make Carolina's School of Public Health such a vital and productive place to be."

"Dean [Bill] Roper worked diligently with faculty to develop the School's national reputation," Dardess continued. "These new honors further ratify the success of their endeavors in bringing together excellent educators, researchers and practitioners. When the new dean is selected, he or she will have in place a firm foundation on which to build our future goals."

Carolina's School of Public Health remains the nation's top such school at a public university,

tied with Harvard University for second place in the United States, just behind Johns Hopkins University. Public health schools and most programs within them are reevaluated every three years.

Since *US News* ranks graduate programs in engineering, business and public affairs annually, the public health specialties grouped with these other disciplines by the magazine are ranked more frequently than the School as a whole.

In addition to those referenced above, top rankings released in April 2003 included two for public health nursing, a specialty within the School's Public Health Leadership Program. Carolina's public health nursing program ranks tenth nationally among all nursing programs, and third among the nation's community/public health nursing programs.

To learn more about the rankings — new and standing — visit www.sph.unc.edu or www.usnews.com. All are referenced in the magazine's April 12, 2004 edition.

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