



Community & Behavioral Health

The University of Iowa College of Public Health

Volume 1, Issue 2

Summer 2004

A Message from the Department Head...

"Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb."

~Sir Winston Churchill

In spite of increasing statewide budget cuts, the Department of Community and Behavioral Health has much to be proud of. We are continuing to grow, due to the efforts of many talented individuals.

With the addition of our PhD and MS degree programs our student body reached 30 this year. We are very proud of both our current students and our alumni. We look forward to growing even more, and adding new degree programs in Health Communication. A special note to alumni- we would love to hear from you. Keep us updated on your careers and achievements.

Our faculty continues to be at the forefront of public health research. They are involved in numerous statewide, national and international projects, ranging from addiction and mental health treatment to rural community empowerment. In this newsletter each of our research centers has shared a little bit about what kind of projects they are involved in, and how it is related to the big picture of public health. As well as contributing to overall growth in the Department, our faculty have many individual achievements. Dr. Mary Aquilino was recently promoted to Associate Professor. Dr. Shelly Campo and Dr. Anne Wallis were awarded the College of Public Health-College of Medicine New Investigator Research Awards.

Within the past year we have welcomed department administrator Rob Svetly, and secretaries Raven Twitchell and Julie Van Dyke. Our research center staff has also grown considerably over the past few months. Along with their direct contributions to department research, our staff are often the face of the department, as they interact with people all across the state.

It has been a period of continual challenges and progress. I hope you enjoy this update on our activities, and that you continue to stay in touch.

Cheers, *John B. Lowe*

John B. Lowe, Dr. P.H., FAHPA, FAAHB

Inside this issue:

New Investigator Research Awards 1

Prairielands ATTC 2

Prevention Research Center 2

Center for Public Health Program Evaluation 3

Iowa Tobacco Research Center 3

Department Offers New Programs 4

New Investigator Research Awards

Two Community and Behavioral Health faculty members were awarded 2003-2004 College of Public Health-College of Medicine New Investigator Research Awards. These awards assist newly appointed primary or joint faculty in the UI College of Public Health or the UI Roy & Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine to advance research activities. Each recipient will receive funding for independent research projects. The award recipients' proposed research projects were chosen on the basis of scientific merit; relevance to the College of Public Health mission; and probability of attracting subsequent extramural research funding for their studies.

The awardees were Dr. Shelly Campo, Assistant Profes-



Wallis



Campo

Dr. Shelly Campo, Assistant Professor, Department of Community and Behavioral Health and Communication Studies (joint), and Dr. Anne Wallis, Assistant Professor, also in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health

Dr. Campo's project is titled "Determining Community Leaders' Understandings of College Drinking and its Negative Consequences." Her research will examine community leaders' perceptions of binge drinking on the UI campus.

Dr. Wallis' project is titled "Analysis of Pregnancy Case Study Data: Developing New Theory about High Risk Pregnancies" Her proposal aims to better understand differences in prenatal care use and low birth weight outcomes among Latina women in Polk County, Iowa and Palm Beach County, Florida.

CBH Departmental Research and Centers

Prairielands Addiction Technology Transfer Center

The Prairielands ATTC (PATTC) conducted a statewide orientation program for substance abuse counselors.

On January 23, 2004, the PATTC began a 12 module set of courses, called Toolbox Training, designed to prepare entry level substance abuse counselors in the state of Iowa for the certification exam. The Toolbox Training curriculum is based on the SAMHSA Tap #21, "Addiction Counseling Competencies" and was developed by a group of treatment supervisors and directors. Included in the curriculum are the NIDA Principles of Effective Drug Treatment.

Sessions are conducted over the ICN (Iowa Communication Network) which allows people to participate in the training at a site close to them once a month. Over 70 counselors representing 20 state, local, and private agencies are par-



ticipating in the training.

In addition to the Toolbox Training in Iowa, South Dakota offers training to help Native American future counselors sit for their certification exam. Oral and written prep courses are conducted each quarter by the University of South Dakota. Before these courses were offered, the pass rate for taking the certification exam was zero percent. Participants who take the oral and/or written prep course(s) have a passing rate of over 80%.

These training opportunities are just a few ways the PATTC fulfills its primary mission of disseminating best practices in substance abuse assessment and treatment to the substance abuse treatment community, thereby facilitating the adoption of science-based practices by substance abuse providers and other health and allied health care professionals.

The Toolbox Training courses help participants learn about:

- Professional and ethical responsibilities
- The biology of addiction
- Clinical evaluations including screening assessment and treatment planning
- Basic counseling skills and counseling families, couples, and significant others
- Treatment knowledge
- Referral, service coordination, and documentation referral
- Profession readiness
- Client, family, and community education



Prevention Research Center

Keg Registration as a Tool to Address Underage and Binge Drinking in Rural Iowa

On January 7, 2004, Keokuk County became the first community in Iowa to enact a county-wide keg registration ordinance. Under the new ordinance, beer kegs will be tagged with a unique identification number. At the time of purchase, retailers will be required to record the keg's ID number along with the purchaser's name, address, and driver's license number. In the event of any problems associated with the party or individuals involved with the keg, police officers will be able to trace the keg purchase and purchaser. Keg registration is intended to reduce the social availability of alcohol to underage consumers and increase adult accountability.

The ordinance was proposed by the Community Health Action Partnership (CHAP) which is funded by the University of Iowa Prevention Research Center (PRC). CHAP was developed to bring community groups together in order to direct their



attention to health promotion and disease prevention. This partnership involves community-based participatory research, implementation of strategies to address community health issues, and the evaluation of demonstration projects.

According to the 2003 Iowa Youth Survey Report, 23% of Sigourney 11th graders reported binge drinking at least 3 of the past 30 days. Recent teen deaths associated with drunk driving and a societal acceptance of teen drinking also brought this issue to the forefront in the Keokuk County community.

Although this is the first county-wide ordinance in Iowa, twenty-three states have implemented statewide keg registration laws including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and Nebraska. CHAP hopes that his ordinance will be the first step toward a statewide keg registration law in Iowa.

For more information visit www.public-health.uiowa.edu/prc/.

Center for Public Health Program Evaluation

By Matthew Levi

The Center for Public Health Program Evaluation is currently working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* team in Des Moines to investigate how medical debt affects the lives of community members and what actions need to be taken to support community residents. *Making Connections* is a data-driven initiative that works with residents of low-income neighborhoods in ten pilot cities nationwide, including Des Moines. The initiative on medical debt builds off of the research performed by organizations such as The Access Project (Schneider Institute for Health Policy, Brandeis University) in Virginia, Illinois, and Florida.

Medical needs often arise suddenly and unexpectedly. Low-income residents are more likely to be uninsured or underinsured, less likely to have financial savings, and are more vulnerable to the financial burdens resulting from medical emergencies. The consequences of medical debt include a range of negative outcomes including social, economic, and health outcomes. Aggressive and inflexible hospital debt collection practices in some communities can increase financial hardship through accruing interest and other pressures. Too often, medical debt can result in credit problems or, in extreme cases, personal bankruptcy. Failure to seek care, fulfill prescriptions, receive bank loans or other lines of credit, pay for basic goods or services, and feelings of stress, anxiety, and hopelessness have all been reported as consequences of medical debt. Medical debt becomes even more of a community issue as residents that are uninformed or ineligible for public assistance turn to friends and family for help.

The Center for Public Health Program Evaluation analyzed data based on interviews with over 700 Des Moines residents living in *Making Connections* neighborhoods



conducted by the Urban Institute and NORC. Our analysis found that 34% of respondents reported debt incurred from medical or health expenses. In comparison to the other *Making Connections* cities for which data have been analyzed, the Des Moines neighborhoods surveyed had the highest proportion of people with medical debt. Our analysis of the Des Moines data found that African-American respondents and families with children are more likely to have medical debt. Some of the findings have been surprising; for example, employed respondents were more likely to have medical debt than their unemployed counterparts and families with incomes between \$15,000 and \$25,000 were most likely to have medical debt

(40%), although families with incomes both under (31%) and over this range (36 %) are also likely to have medical debt. These findings concur with data from other sources showing that even though people work, they may still be uninsured or underinsured. Further data collection and analysis will seek to learn more about disparities in medical debt across Polk County by geography, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status; and levels, sources, and consequences of medical debt.

The *Making Connections* project continues to challenge the traditional role of the evaluator of public health programs. The Des Moines team participates in defining result indicators as the evaluation team becomes an involved partner, participating in the collection and exchange of data as evaluation components become integral to the community building process.

1. National Public Radio, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, *National Survey on Health Care*, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2002.

2. The Access Project, Champaign County Health Care Consumers, Human Services Coalition of Dade County, Tenants' and Workers Support Committee, *The Consequences of Medical Debt*, The Public Welfare Foundation, 2003.

Iowa Tobacco Research Center

Esther Baker joined the ITRC on November 17, 2003, as the new Program Coordinator. Esther received a BA in telecommunication/broadcasting and an MA in communication from Michigan State University. Most recently, Esther spent four years as director of public relations for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. As ITRC Program Coordinator, Esther's responsibilities include coordination and oversight of the activities of the ITRC program and staff, marketing of Quitline Iowa and other ITRC program services to target populations, serving as liaison to specialists, agencies, organizations and other potential partners, writing grants and representing ITRC programs to various audiences.

The ITRC hired a new Training Coordinator, Jeannie Kimbel, in July. Jeannie received a BA in psychology and an MA in counseling and human development from the University of Iowa. Previously, Jeannie worked as a clinical supervisor at the Mid-Eastern Council on Chemical Abuse (MECCA), supervising clinical staff in the facilitation of substance abuse services. Prior to that, Jeannie was a counselor at MECCA, providing substance abuse treatment and aftercare services. As Training Coordinator,

Jeannie's responsibilities include conducting training for new Quitline counselors, providing continuous training and evaluation of counselors, and developing new counseling protocols.

Ariel Dragan was hired as the new Database Manager in December 2003. Ariel is an MBA student in the Tippie School of Management at the University of Iowa and has worked as a database and internet consultant. He received a BS in mechanical engineering at Transilvania University in Brasov, Romania and studied information technology/software engineering at DeVry University in Toronto, Canada. Ariel's primary responsibilities include redesigning and managing the Quitline database and generating reports.

After working several months as a temporary staff member, Megan Hicks was offered a permanent position as Office Coordinator for the ITRC in July 2003. Megan received a BA in communication studies from the University of Iowa. Her responsibilities include supporting the operation of Quitline Iowa and other research projects, assisting in the development of Quitline Iowa promotional materials and publications, and providing maintenance for the ITRC and Quitline Iowa websites.

INTERESTED IN OUR GRADUATE PROGRAM?

Questions or requests for information about our MPH, MS, or PhD programs should contact

Amy Engelmann
Graduate Program Coordinator
amy-engelmann@uiowa.edu
319/384-5380

Department of Community and Behavioral Health

College of Public Health
University of Iowa
200 Hawkins Drive, E225 GH
Iowa City, IA 52242

Phone: 319/384-5380
Fax: 319/384-5385
www.public-health.uiowa.edu/cbh/



The University of Iowa
College of Public Health

Department Offers New Degree Programs: PhD and MS

This year kicked off enrollment in the department's new PhD and MS degree programs. The inaugural class program includes three PhD students and five MS students. Along with 12 new MPH students, this brings our current student body up to 30.

Our new students for 2003-2004 include:

PhD Program— Karen Boulanger, MA Western Illinois University; Jennifer Eldridge Houser, MS Nebraska Medical College of Nursing; and Jana Peterson, MPH University of Iowa.

MS Program— Leah Frerichs, BS Iowa State University; Melissa Gutierrez, BA University of Iowa; Beth Joslin, BS Truman State University; Disa Lubker, BA University of Iowa; Ashley McKenna, BS Iowa State University; and Lance Till, BA Cornell College.

MPH Program— Erin Abramsohn, BS University of Iowa; Ritika Bhatt, MBBS Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, India; Eva Fassbinder, BA University of Iowa; Rachel Horner, MA University of Iowa; Jan Jacobson, BS University of Iowa; Marsha Kremer, BA University of Iowa; Asmita Mhaskar, BHMS University of Pune, India; Angel Mueller, BS University of Illinois; Florin Oprescu, MD University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj, Romania; and Rebecca Schimming, BA College of St. Benedict; Andria Timmer, MA University of Iowa.

Alumni Report...

- Deepali Gham, MPH 2003, is living in Boston, MA, and will be a student at Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine starting this Fall 2004.
- Kellee McCrory, MPH 2003, is the Center Coordinator for the University of Iowa Center for Public Health Program Evaluation. She is currently working on the Comprehensive Cancer Control evaluation and the Linn County Mental Health/Developmental Disability program evaluation.
- Keri Mercer, MPH 2003, is a Research Assistant at the University of Iowa Center for Public Health Program Evaluation. She is working on projects for the Evaluation for Healthy and Ready to Work program and the Iowa Medical Home Initiative