



Department of Community and Behavioral Health

University of Iowa College of Public Health

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A Message from the Department Head...

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"You may be whatever you resolve to be—determine to be something in the world and you will be something. "I cannot," never accomplished anything. "I will try" has worked wonders." - J. Hawes

The past year has been another outstanding year of growth and success for the Department of Community and Behavioral Health. As we enter our 5th year of operation it was a pleasure for me to see the strength of performance by students, faculty and staff within the department.

In July 2004, we graduated three students from our Master of Public Health program. Two of these students, Erin Heiden and Florin Oprescu, not only continued on in pursuit of their PhD in Community and Behavioral Health, but were also both recipients of the Milford E. Barnes award. Our third summer 2004 graduate, Elizabeth Penziner, is continuing her study of genetic discrimination and predictive health information at the Huntington's Disease Center of Excellence at the University of Iowa, where she is a senior research assistant.

The department proudly graduated our first Master of Science student, Beth Joslin, during the spring 2005 term. The May 2005 graduation was also celebrated by six MPH students Community and Behavioral Health: Erin Abramsohn, Jennifer Cook, Kathleen Crawford, Robin Kopelman, Peggy Mills, and Julie Lindower. In summer 2005, Leah Frerichs, Disa Lubker, and Askley McKenna all completed their Master of Science degrees.

Our faculty members continue with their outstanding research. There are over fifteen currently funded research grants within the department. Our faculty have also produced an amazing sixty-two peer reviewed journal articles that have been published since a year ago.

May this newsletter find you well. I hope that you remain in touch with us as the department continues to progress.

John B. Lowe,
Dr.PH., FAHPA, FAAHB

Researchers Study Support for Injured Athletes

Dr. Jingzhen (Ginger) Yang, Assistant Professor, Department of Community and Behavioral Health, is studying the effects of perceived social support on the occurrence of depression and anxiety among college athletes. She and her colleagues recently received a pilot grant from University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center. Dr. Yang is working with Dr. Corrine Peek-Asa of Occupational and Environmental Health; Dr. Dan Foster from the Department of Exercise Science; and Dr. John Albright and Dr. Ned Amendola from the Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Roy J. & Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine.

Athletes who participate in 22 sports at The University of Iowa will be recruited into the study. All participant athletes will complete a baseline survey. When the athletes become injured during the study period, they will be enrolled and followed for six months. They will complete surveys that ask them about their psychological recovery and the kind of social support that helped with recovery. The study is currently in progress and will end in July 2006.

Dr. Yang and her team hope that the results of the current study will help coaches, athletes, and caregivers discover how athletes receive social and emotional support during recovery. With subsequent studies that are planned, the research team anticipates designing interventions to reduce the emotional turmoil that athletes undergo as they recover from injury.

Student Conducts Study in Home Country of Romania

Florin Oprescu, CBH PhD student, spent June and July of 2005 in his home country of Romania studying the incidence of childhood injuries. Florin wrote his first successful grant application and received funding this past year from the Center for International Rural Environmental Health. The purpose of the grant is to compare both the rates and types of injuries among rural and urban children in Transylvania. Florin is working with Dr. Corrinne Peek-Asa, Professor, Occupational and Environmental Health. Dr. Peek-Asa and Florin are now involved in analysis of the data gathered.

Cluj-Napoca, a city of 325,000 in northwestern Romania, is the city in which Florin collected data. Cluj-Napoca is one of the most important academic, cultural, and industrial centers in Romania, and considered to be the historic capital of Transylvania. It is the city in which Florin earned his degree in medicine in 2001.

Florin says of his summer experience, "It was a good, practical, real life experience on how to manage a project—financing, people, everything, and how to build relationships to make it work." Florin says he is not surprised by what is being discovered because he knows the environment back home.

Florin says that the most enjoyable part of his summer experience was the feeling he was making a contribution to his homeland. Florin's professional goal is to work for an international health-related organization.



Cluj-Napoca in northwestern Romania was the site of Florin Oprescu's research.

CHAP Increases Healthy Choices in Keokuk County

Members of the Community Health Action Partnership (CHAP) along with high school students and other Sigourney community residents have succeeded in promoting the consumption of dairy products as a healthy alternative to sweetened beverages. Their efforts have been ongoing since November of 2004. CHAP is funded by the University of Iowa Prevention Research Center (PRC). CHAP was developed to bring community groups together for the causes of health promotion and disease prevention.

In February 2005, a dairy vending machine was installed in the Sigourney high school to increase students' access to dairy products. Mahaska Bottling provided and stocked the new dairy vending machine. An event was held to unveil the new dairy vending machine and to provide product samples available for purchase. The choices included various flavors of 1% milk, low-fat yogurt, and string cheese. Students have responded favorably to the new vending machine and are now pursuing options to include other healthy snacks in existing vending machines. Keota High School has contacted Mahaska Bottlers to offer dairy products to their students, evidence that the word may be spreading in Keokuk County.

CHAP Project Manager Shellie Striegel says that it was the involved Sigourney students that guided the efforts and made them succeed. Shellie says, "Six female students in the focus group made the choices that would appeal to students and created the excitement with art work, prizes, and t-shirts." CBH students Karen Boulanger and Lance Till were also involved in the process of gathering input to insure the success of the project. The students' involvement began as part of their Health Communication Campaigns Spring 2004 class taught by Dr. Shelly Campo.

CHAP members have also contacted local restaurants and businesses to promote the benefits of increased dairy consumption, as part of this campaign. Free literature was provided to Kapple Dental Associates, The Keokuk County Medical Clinic, and the PTO Group in an effort to promote dairy products to their clientele. Letters were mailed to the local Subway and Pizza Ranch restaurants to request that they serve low fat milk as an alternative to sweetened beverages. Pizza Ranch now has 2% milk available. For more information about CHAP and the PRC, visit www.public-health.uiowa.edu/prc/.

Student Pursues Interest in Health of Adults with Disabilities

CBH PhD student Jana Petersen's interest in the health needs of adults with intellectual disabilities is personal. She has a sister with Down syndrome. She has often been a volunteer for Special Olympics, and attended conferences about health issues for adults with disabilities with her family.

People with intellectual disabilities have rates of chronic disease that equal or exceed general population rates. They also experience accelerated declines in physical fitness and functioning with aging. Regular physical activity could combat these health problems. However, this population is less active than the general population, with an average volume of physical activity that falls well below public health recommendations.

Health promotion research for this population has been sparse, but Jana will be contributing to that body of literature. In her doctoral dissertation, Jana is currently examining factors related to physical activity participation by adults with intellectual disabilities residing in community supported living environments.

Jana will address two research questions:

- 1) factors that correlate with physical activity for adults with intellectual disabilities residing in supported living environments.
- 2) which of the factors identified is acceptable for intervention within the supported living environment and how the factors can be intervened upon.

Dr. John Lowe, CBH Department Head, is Jana's dissertation adviser.



PhD student Jana Peterson (left), and her sisters Mia Peterson (center), and Missy Peterson (right).

New Staff

Arlys Thompson has replaced Kristy Hall as the Graduate Program Coordinator for Community and Behavioral Health. Kristy left in July to move with her husband to the Des Moines area, and take a position as a Guidance Counselor at ADM (Adel DeSoto Minburn) school district. Kristy is an alumnus of ADM.

Arlys has a masters degree in continuing education from The University of Iowa. She explains that she completed several courses in student development as part of her masters work because of her interest in both graduate education and adult education.

Arlys has worked for The University of Iowa for the past 19 years. Her work during those years was always at the Center for Disabilities and Development, but her roles changed. Over the years, her duties have included managing pre-service education, coordinating a leadership development program for graduate students, managing community education, or managing staff development.



Thompson

CBH Graduate Attends National Meeting

In September, Kellee Thorburn McCrory, MPH, Coordinator, Iowa Center for Evaluation Research (ICER) in the department of Community and Behavioral Health, attended an invitation-only evaluation workshop in Atlanta sponsored by the Chronic Disease Directors of the CDC. Kellee received her MPH in Community and Behavioral Health in 2003 and was hired by ICER immediately after receiving her MPH.

The focus of the Atlanta workshop was to discuss best practices among states and develop potential evaluation indicators for state comprehensive cancer control programs. Kellee is the evaluator for the Iowa Consortium for Comprehensive Cancer Control. CBH graduate student, Lance Till, assists Kellee in the on-going evaluation.

ICER's process evaluation focuses on three of the Consortium's goals and uses multiple quantitative and qualitative research methods. The Consortium membership is made up of cancer professionals, cancer survivors, and agencies working to combat cancer in the state of Iowa. ICER is beginning its third year of evaluation work for the Consortium.

**Department of Community
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Our Mission:

In collaboration with communities, promote health and quality of life by developing, evaluating, and disseminating evidence-based practices (through research, training and innovative policy).

**INTERESTED IN OUR
PROGRAM?**

Direct questions or requests for information about our MPH, MS, or PhD programs to:

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**The University of Iowa
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Anthropologist Joins CBH Faculty

Nanette Barkey, PhD, is the newest faculty member in Community and Behavioral Health. She has a one-quarter time appointment in the department, and a three-quarters time appointment in Anthropology. Dr. Barkey will teach a course entitled "Anthropology and International Health" in spring 2006.

Dr. Barkey received her bachelor's degree in anthropology with a minor in nutrition at Case Western Reserve University, and joined the Peace Corps upon graduation. After language and technical training, she worked for two years as a public health supervisor in a rural health zone in Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo). Her MSPH is from the University of South Florida where she was in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Applied to Public Health track. Her Master's thesis is based on a family planning research project she participated in as a CDC/ASPH intern assigned to Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Following her public health training Dr. Barkey worked as a researcher in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology at Loyola University; as a Public Health Trainer for CARE in Angola; and on two health projects in Vientiane, Laos.

For the past ten years Dr. Barkey's research interests have been the health of communities in transition, particularly the post-war contexts of Angola and Mozambique. Her dissertation research examined the relationship between psychosocial stress and blood pressure and how social support served to buffer urban Mozambicans from a variety of stressors. Dr. Barkey's current research spans two sites in Angola—a city in the central highlands where she is investigating strategies for coping with war-time experiences, and along the Angola-Congo border where she is studying the health issues for refugees returning from Congo to Angola.



Barkey