

**SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**



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Healthviews

**Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health
Advances MCH Research, Practice and Policy**

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SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH



The School of Public Health is one of seven health sciences colleges at UIC providing a system-wide approach to healthcare.



AT LEFT Photo taken by Kettelene Theodore, MPH candidate in health policy and administration, in St. George's, Grenada. Two boys joined a group of fishermen on Saturday morning to haul in the catch of the day. Ms. Theodore spent two months in Grenada working with Grenada Planned Parenthood Association to develop and pilot-test a sexual and reproductive health survey.

Healthviews

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Healthviews magazine is published by the Office of Advancement in the UIC School of Public Health. The school is dedicated to protecting and improving the health of people in Chicago, across the nation and around the world. To this end, UIC SPH faculty, staff, students and alumni are reaching out to local communities, city and state officials, and international partners with cutting-edge research, community-based health services and groundbreaking public health policy.



The UIC School of Public Health is committed to preserving the environment. This publication is printed on post-consumer recycled paper using biodegradable ink.



The fall is always a busy time at the UIC School of Public Health, with new students and faculty joining our community and new courses and certificates being offered. Take, for example, the

school's new Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (see pages 4-5). I am proud to share the news that our school joins an elite group of only 13 centers across the U.S. to receive funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration. Or our new Coordinating Center for Public Health Practice, featured on page 17, which will create a system of coordination and communication.

Also in this issue of *Healthviews*, you'll read about a new faculty member whose research is making headlines. On pages 6-7, Professor David Swedler's study is highlighted. He found that police officers serving in states with high gun ownership are more likely to be killed on duty than those in states with lower gun ownership. His results are quite timely, given the conversations taking place about gun control in light of the shooting in Oregon and the public's push for investigations into police-involved shootings.

The National Scope/Global Impact section of the magazine is always one of my favorites because I am able to get a glimpse of what our students and faculty are doing around the world. Check out pages 8-9 to read about long-time faculty member and director of our Community Health Sciences division, Dr. Jesus Ramirez-Valles, who spent part of his summer in Italy as the recipient of a very prestigious fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation.

The Advancing Health section showcases the variety of reasons why someone chooses to financially support UIC SPH. On pages 13-16, you'll read about an alumna whose passion for travel is the reason she proudly supports our global health program, and a faculty member who is so committed that he included the school in his estate plan. I hope these stories inspire you to consider a gift to the school to support its many initiatives to make the world a healthier place for everyone.

Have you heard about Healthy Illinois 2012? It is a statewide effort to improve the health of the public and UIC SPH is among the organizations taking the lead! You can read about our Intergovernmental Agreement with the Illinois Department of Public Health on pages 18-19.

Lastly, I hope you'll take a moment to read about the new members of our Alumni Board. These individuals give their time and talents to make their alma mater a leader in public health education for current and future students. They also help plan and execute engagement opportunities for fellow alumni. Check out the photos on pages 23-25 to see some of the events they helped to host in recent months. I hope to see you at one of the many events we have planned during the coming year.

Paul Brandt-Rauf, DrPH, MD, ScD
Dean, UIC School of Public Health

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Supporting the Legacy of Maternal and Child Health Education

Since the mid-1980s, the Irving Harris Foundation has supported burgeoning leaders in maternal and child health (MCH) at the UIC School of Public Health (UIC SPH). The Foundation's mission is to enhance quality of life through creation and development of innovative programs, preventive practices, and public policies that promote social justice and address inequities. Each year, Irving Harris' contributions to the Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (CoE in MCH), formerly the Maternal and Child Health Program,



Emily Hejna, Sherri Smith, and Cristina Turino are the 2015-2016 Irving Harris Maternal and Child Health Assistantship recipients

provide Research Assistant positions with tuition waivers to three students in the MCH concentration. Irving Harris RAs contribute to the innovative research at the CoE in MCH and are provided leadership training so they are better equipped to make a powerful, positive impact on the lives of women, children, and families. Emily Hejna, Sherri Smith, and Cristina Turino are the recipients of the 2015-2016 Irving Harris Maternal and Child Health Assistantship.

This fall, Ms. Hejna began her first year as an MCH MPH student with a concentration in Global Health. She received her bachelor's from the University of Iowa with a double major in Pre-Med and Studio Art, and a minor in Global Health. In the summer of 2013, Ms. Hejna did an internship at an HIV clinic in Cape Town, South Africa that treated a large number of HIV positive pregnant women and infants. During her internship, she staffed a mobile clinic that traveled to the townships at night to increase access to care for patients who avoided treatment due to the fear of being stigmatized for their HIV positive status. This experience helped solidify her interest in MCH in a global context. Ms. Hejna chose the UIC SPH because of

the opportunity to study at the CoE in MCH and because of the generous support of the Irving Harris Foundation. She was also excited to return to Chicago, her hometown.

Ms. Smith is a first-year MCH MPH student with a concentration in Global Health. She is passionate about addressing health inequities, and was drawn to UIC where she could focus on MCH and global health from a social determinants and social justice perspective. Ms. Smith is working as a Research Assistant on a study about safe sleep campaigns with Dr. Nadine Peacock and Dr. Susan Altfield. For the past year, Ms. Smith has worked as a pharmacy tech, where she often sees systemic barriers that keep patients from accessing their necessary medications. This contributes to her interest in public health and she plans to work to reduce health inequities. Ms. Smith earned her bachelor's degree from Hope College with a major in Japanese Composite Studies, and a minor in Biology. She plans to serve in the Peace Corps upon finishing her course work in MCH.

Ms. Turino, a second year dual MPH/MBA student with a concentration in MCH, is beginning her second year as an Irving Harris MCH RA and said that she has "been provided with invaluable financial support, leadership training, and the opportunity to work with incredible mentors in the field of MCH." Ms. Turino began her MPH/MBA after working for three years as the Coordinator of Direct Service Programs at Champaign County Health Care Consumers, a grass roots social justice and direct service organization. In this role, she coordinated three programs that provided case management and health system navigation services to over 2,000 Central Illinois residents each year at the County Jail, Presence Covenant Hospital, and other locations. This past summer, she did her practicum at Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, where she coordinated the efforts of the Illinois Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Response Collaborative. In May, Ms. Turino began working on the Well-Woman Project, a research study of the Center of Excellence in MCH, CityMatCH, and the Kellogg Foundation, that works to elevate women's voices about the elements of their communities and cities that impact their ability to be healthy. Ms. Turino is an Associate Board member of EverThrive Illinois and the recipient of the 2015 James R. Nelson Illinois Public Health Association Award.

According to Dr. Arden Handler, who serves as Director of the CoE in MCH, support from the Irving Harris Foundation has funded at least three assistantships each year and provided additional scholarship and stipends to students who are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of women, children and families. These students are leaders in the MCH field who will surely make a difference for decades to come. ●

This year's APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition will be held in Chicago, bringing together more than 12,000 public health professionals from around the world to network, educate and share experiences. The conference theme is: "Health in All Policies." How would you suggest the field of public health work with non-traditional health partners to create policies that promote healthy communities?



Collaborative partnership and trust with the community are necessary when working with non-traditional partners. Collaborative work allows the policy makers to understand and consider the norms of the community. This increases the likelihood of success in creating a healthy community.

AYMAN TABANI, BA '15



The field of public health provides the opportunity to better understand a community, by focusing on the community rather than the individual. Both public health professionals and non-traditional health partners should be listening to the thoughts and concerns of community members, which will help mold policies that reflect the needs of the community.

KUNBI ADEFESO, BA '15



To achieve health equity, public health needs to forge alliances with organizations and people who are building collective power among communities that are excluded or marginalized and as a result have low quality social determinants of health.

JAMES E. BLOYD, MPH, DRPH CANDIDATE
REGIONAL HEALTH OFFICER,
COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC HEALTH



We can work together to highlight impactful research and to disseminate effective public health practices through social media. In the era of personalized and digital health, embracing an interdisciplinary approach using traditional Western medicine, integrative health practices (i.e. mindfulness, yoga), and public health frameworks on virtual platforms (web, mobile apps) could be the key to creating innovative policies to promote health and wellness globally.

KEE CHAN, PHD
CLINICAL ASSISTANT
PROFESSOR, HEALTH POLICY AND
ADMINISTRATION



One of the most effective ways we can work with non-traditional health partners is to adopt the Health in All Policies approach, which is supported by APHA, World Health Organization and many other important organizations. This collaborative approach supports promoting health and health equity considerations into policy decision-making by building local capacity, engaging key stakeholders, and creating structural or process change.

SANDY SLATER, PHD
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR, HEALTH POLICY
AND ADMINISTRATION



When trying to craft policies to promote healthier communities, it is very important to consider creative solutions and employ non-traditional partners. For example, in an effort to increase the physical activity level of children, public health organizations can partner with bike share companies to increase access to bikes and the safety for students allowing them to ride to and from school.

LINDSAY PLUFF, MPH '15
PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATE,
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL
AND PREVENTION

Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health an Incubator for Ideas and Interventions

The University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health recently received a five-year \$1.75 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) to fund a Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (CoE in MCH). The CoE in MCH joins an elite group of only 13 such centers across the United States, and is the only one of its kind in Illinois.

The health of mothers, infants and children is an important public health issue, as their well-being “determines the health of the next generation and can help predict future public health challenges for families, communities and the health care system,” according to the U.S. Department of Public Health and Human Services. Dr. Arden Handler, professor of Community Health Sciences and Director of the CoE, points out that while the health needs of women and children are not necessarily different from other groups, “sometimes they need special attention, or a spotlight” as their needs are often ignored. There are significant disparities in health outcomes for women and children based on socioeconomic, geographical and/or racial and ethnic differences, which is a major focus of the CoE.



Dr. Arden Handler (second from right) joins MCH students to visit Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Mark Kirk during the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) Conference to advocate for the MCH Title V Block Grant and the impactful work happening in Illinois

The stated purpose of the Centers of Excellence is to “prepare future and MCH public health professionals, achieve optimal MCH outcomes, and to advance MCH science, research, practice and policy.” To achieve this purpose, the mission of the CoE in MCH is to “provide undergraduate and graduate students and working professionals with a rigorous evidence-informed academic program steeped in social justice, practical experience, and collaboration with communities and Title V partners leading to the development of local to global leaders focused on supporting the health and well-being of women, children, and families.” The CoE in MCH focuses on life-course health and population health in the context of the larger environment, socio-economics, system and policy responses and social structure.

One distinctive way the CoE prepares students for the future is by offering both professional and personal development courses and opportunities. These include student participation in a strengths-based leadership assessment and an opportunity to reflect and build upon the results, courses and workshops in personal leadership development, and a workshop each semester on management training/professional development. As Dr. Handler noted, faculty at the CoE in MCH, particularly Kristina Risley, DrPH, with support from Jaime Klaus, were pioneers in this area. “I would say that it’s not as unique as it used to be, because other schools have caught on, but I think we were one of the first to highlight personal leadership development and did it not just with our own students, but with the MCH workforce.”

For alumni of the program, the focus on professional and personal development certainly enhanced their experience. “In our core MCH classes we pushed each other to think more critically, share our variety of life experiences to better our education, and look at public health with a more holistic lens. With the changing health care environment moving towards a more systems-thinking focus, I believe the UIC CoE in MCH provides a top of the line education,” said Dan Weiss, a member of the 2015 MPH, Community Health Sciences cohort.

While the impact of the CoE on those with a concentration in MCH is obvious, the benefits of the center will have a much larger reach. “...It spills out into the entire school. First of all, students in other programs take our classes; our faculty teach not just MCH courses but skills-based courses in the integrated core, and our MCHEPI program, which reaches students in both epidemiology and CHS, is nationally lauded both for its continuing education efforts (from Kristin Rankin and Deb Rosenberg) as well as for our outstanding doctoral training,” Dr. Handler remarked.

Dr. Handler also indicated the program’s position in the community as a contributing factor to receiving the award. “We’re seen as a real leader in the community. We’re seen as an intellectual home, an incubator for maternal and child health ideas and interventions,” she explained. The CoE has received grant funding from the MCHB since 1983 to support graduate-level training in MCH; as such, the Center has been a community institution for over 30 years.

In addition to the immense contribution the CoE makes to maternal and child health in Chicago and Illinois is the work being done through collaborations and partnerships across the country. The CoE works with Title V agencies, other MCH training grants, the MCH Pipeline Program at Howard University, the University of North Carolina (UNC) National MCH Workforce Development Center, and many community-based public and private partners.

The UNC National MCH Workforce Development Center’s Paired Practica Program is a unique opportunity that provides real-world maternal and child health experience by pairing a graduate student from a MCH Program with an undergraduate student from Howard University. Cindy San Miguel, a 2016 MPH, CHS

candidate, said participating in the program was an incredible experience, adding that the program “allowed me to not only flex my public health and mentorship skills, but to also...grasp how important it is to balance my role in encouraging the future generations of MCH professionals while also leading the efforts on our projects.” Ms. San Miguel also credited the CoE in preparing her for the practicum, saying “The CoE in MCH



really facilitated this amazing opportunity and the rigorous coursework during my first year was instrumental in the success of my practicum.”

Looking forward to the next five years, Dr. Handler says those involved with the CoE will focus on rethinking and reshaping current courses (and possibly adding new ones) to best meet the needs and interests of its students and the MCH workforce. She wants to provide more leadership training and vision in the region, and more professional development for students at the CoE, including a brand new alumni mentoring program. With all the opportunities provided by the CoE, the graduates of the program will undoubtedly be prepared to be global leaders in the field of maternal and child health. ●

MCH 2015 students from the class “Health Systems: Services, Programs, and Policies for Women, Children, and Families” presented research posters on a state health system

Key Dates in Maternal and Child Health History*

1904: First National Labor Committee

The development of the first national child labor committee indicated a presence in Congress of individuals who were concerned about child labor. The establishment of the committee led to the development of the Federal Children’s Bureau in 1912 and the Federal Child Labor Law in 1916.

1921 – 1929: Maternity and Infancy Care Act; Sheppard Towner Act

The passage of this Act resulted in federal grants-in-aid to states for child and adult health programs. Another major result of this Act was the development of full-time units of maternal and child health services in state health departments and the first MCH training program. Although repealed in 1929, the Act set the pattern for State-Federal cooperation that would re-emerge in Title V of the Social Security Act in 1935.

1935: Title V of the Social Security Act

Title V provided programs for maternity, infant, and child care, as well as a full range of medical services for children, with a focus on low-income families and those with children with special health care needs. Funds were allocated to states to pay for Maternal and Child Health and Crippled Children services, including physicians, dentists, public health nurses, medical social workers, and nutritionists. Title V was not an entitlement program like other sections of the Social Security legislation. It consisted of 4 parts:

- 1) Maternal and Child Health Services,
- 2) Services for Crippled Children,
- 3) Child-Welfare Services, and
- 4) Vocational Rehabilitation.

Title V is the longest-standing public health legislation in American history and continues to work to improve the health of women and children.

1951: Eliot Becomes Bureau Chief

Martha May Eliot, a pediatrician, was instrumental in many postwar programs for maternal and child health. In 1951, she became Bureau Chief of the National Children’s Bureau Division of Child and Maternal Health.

1965: Medicare and Medicaid Established

Medicare (Title XVIII) was established to provide health insurance coverage to persons over age 65 and Medicaid (Title XIX) was established to provide health insurance coverage to low income women and children (also, aged, blind and disabled). The establishment of Medicare and Medicaid was monumental in that it led to the provision of health care to the majority of Americans over 65 years of age and has expanded health services to low income children, their caretakers, and the disabled.

1983: UIC MCH Program Established

Established by Dr. Naomi Morris, the Maternal and Child Health Program (now the UIC Center of Excellence in MCH) began receiving funding from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) in support of graduate-level training in MCH.

2008: MCH Block Grant Rated Effective

The PART assessment found that the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant was among the 19 percent of federal programs that received the highest rating of “effective.” The MCH block grant has been effective at reducing infant mortality, expanding access to early prenatal care, collaborating with other organizations, and implementing successful programs to improve the health of women, children, and families.

*Information compiled from <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/about/timeline/index.html>

Police more likely to be killed on duty in states with high gun ownership

Camden and Newark, New Jersey are perceived as two of the most violent cities in the nation, yet New Jersey’s police officers are among the least likely to get shot on the job. Montana, with its serene landscapes and national parks, has among the highest homicide rates for law enforcement officers. Why?

Across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, homicides of police officers are linked to the statewide level of gun ownership, according to a new study published in the American Journal of Public Health. The study found that police officers serving in states with high private gun ownership are more than three times more likely to be killed on the job than those on the job in states with the lowest gun ownership.

Previous studies have linked firearm ownership with higher overall firearm death rates in the United States and internationally. Until now, none of the studies have examined the increased risk to law enforcement personnel. “If we’re interested in protecting police officers, we need to look at what’s killing them, and what’s killing them is guns,” says the study’s lead author, David Swedler, research assistant professor of environmental and occupational health sciences. “We know that 92 percent of police officers killed in the line of duty are killed by guns, three-quarters of which are handguns,” Dr. Swedler said.

“We find that officers are at an increased risk for being killed the more frequently they encounter guns in public settings.”

Dr. Swedler and his colleagues looked at the homicide rates of police officers by state between 1996 and 2010 using data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation database, which logs every officer

killed in the line of duty. Law enforcement homicide rates were calculated as the number of officers killed by guns per number of officers employed in each state.

Statewide gun ownership rates were calculated using the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, an annual nationwide survey that collects data over a wide range of health topics (including household firearm ownership) as well as state-level data on gun-related suicides, which have been proven to accurately reflect gun ownership rates.



Dr. David Swedler

Of the 782 homicides of police officers over the study period, 716 were committed using guns; 515 of them with handguns. States averaged one law enforcement officer homicide per year, but because states vary in the number of officers employed, some had higher numbers of officer homicides, while other states had none.

On average, the researchers found that 38 percent of U.S. households have at least one gun, ranging from 4.8 percent of households in the District of Columbia to 62 percent in Wyoming.

Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Mississippi and Montana were in the top quintile both for gun ownership and for law enforcement homicides, while Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island were in the lowest quintile for gun ownership and police officer homicides.

“We found that officers aren’t being killed in states with high violent-crime rates. While violent crime rates didn’t track closely to officer homicide rates, it was public gun ownership that had

Students Gain First Experience in Global Public Health

In September, 16 undergraduate students enrolled in the course “Public Health and Global Societies” went to Chicago’s Daley Plaza with teaching scholar and UIC SPH alumna, Ashley Dyer (MPH ‘11) to participate in the *Under One Sky* event, which was co-sponsored by Save the Children, One, and Rotary International. This event was one of many taking place worldwide to raise awareness around the Global Goals for Sustainable Development that call on world leaders to confront poverty, inequality, and climate change.



Ensuring healthy populations remains at the forefront of these goals. To prepare for the event, students participated in a conference call with Diana Onken, Director of Mobilization for the Save the Children Action Network. They discussed ways to mobilize to end preventable newborn, child, and maternal deaths around the world. Moreover, the students learned how to confront this issue now through garnering support for the bipartisan ‘Reach Every Mother and Child Act (S. 1911).’

At the *Under One Sky* event, students came prepared to ask people to support the Act and successfully collected over 175 signatures. In addition to gaining real world public health experience, this activity fulfilled the students’ Community Service Learning component of the course where the goal is to have students translate public health principles into practice.

For many students, this opportunity was the first of its kind to participate in global public health and sparked an interest in how to get more involved in these efforts. In moving forward, participating students have already started discussions on how to effectively collaborate with Save the Children and bring more awareness events to the UIC undergraduates on campus. ●

Undergraduate students gathered in Daley Plaza to participate in the Under One Sky event

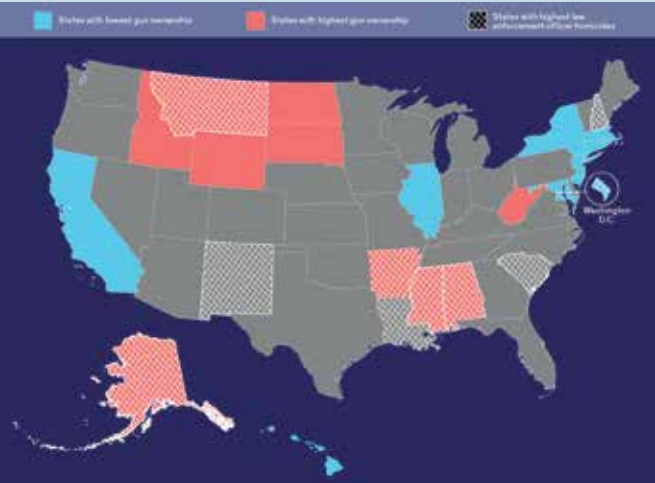
the strongest relationship,” Dr. Swedler said. “Hypothetically, officers might be put at increased risk if they are more frequently encountering violent criminals, but our data doesn’t find that to be the case,” he said. “We find that officers are at an increased risk for being killed the more frequently they encounter guns in public settings.”

Dr. Swedler says that one reason why high gun ownership and police officer killing are so closely linked is that many officers

get shot while responding to domestic disturbance calls. “Research shows that responding to domestic violence calls are one of the most common situations in which officers are killed. In states where firearms are more prevalent, officers responding to reports of domestic violence are more often entering potentially lethal situations compared to officers responding to such calls in states with lower firearm prevalence,” Swedler said.



Based on their data, Dr. Swedler and his colleagues estimate that a 10 percent higher statewide firearm ownership would have resulted in 10 more law enforcement officer homicides in each state over the 15 year study period. “Statewide firearm ownership is definitely a risk factor for police officers,” he said. “Higher private gun ownership increases the frequency with which officers encounter life-threatening situations. If we care about the safety of those officers, then we need to think about them when considering state gun laws.” ●



Making a Difference in the Health of Populations Around the World

1. NICARAGUA

Paula Rusca, MPH candidate in health policy and administration, worked to improve Nicaragua's Clean Water Program by collecting and analyzing data to help AMOS Health and Hope to continually provide communities with safe drinking water. She learned how household water filters create safe water and how this in turn improves the health of the people in rural communities.



Mariela Rodriguez

2. TURKEY

Zabin S. Patel, MPH candidate in epidemiology and biostatistics, conducted a cross-sectional study that investigates the Quality-of-Life (QoL) of Turkish patients receiving head and neck therapy. She also examined whether QoL is related to socio-demographic variables, including age, educational level, marital status, area of residence, monthly income, and employment status, or clinical variables such as pain, type of surgical treatment, stages of disease, and time since surgery.



Kate Vergara

3. CHICAGO

Charlotte Erickson, MPH candidate in epidemiology, spent the summer at the Greater Humboldt Park Diabetes Empowerment Center where she conducted heart screenings as part of the Keep Your Heart Healthy Program (KYHY). She also helped compile and analyze the data and later presented what she found to the KYHH outreach team, including overall prevalence of high blood pressure, and high blood pressure prevalence stratified by different variables such as sex, zip code, BMI, and race/ethnicity.



Charlotte Erickson

4. MEXICO

Mariela Rodriguez, MPH candidate in community health sciences, worked in Cuernavaca with the Reproductive Health Department on the Programa de Rescate Obstétrico y Neonatal: Tratamiento Óptimo y Oportuno (PRONTO) project. She assisted with data analysis and co-authored a paper on a descriptive study on the quality of care (QoC) during labor and delivery in the Mexican states of Campeche and Mexico State.

5. NIGERIA

Kate Vergara, PhD candidate in community health sciences, conducted a multi-national evaluation on the CORE Group Polio Project in Angola, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan. The analysis included quantitative and qualitative data and interviews with representatives from national ministries of health. Her favorite experiences were in the field when she assisted vaccinating kids under five years old, door-to-door with the community health workers.

6. INDIA

Ellen Kerns, MPH candidate in epidemiology and biostatistics, traveled to Jaipur to conduct a community survey that assessed the health behaviors of patients served by the local health clinic.



Queer Aging: Stories of the Gayest Male Generation

The aging of the Baby Boomer generation in Western societies is creating

significant cultural and demographic changes. Within this generation, there is a very unique cohort: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (LGBT). In particular, older gay men in this cohort are the first group to age with the “gay” identity and the survivors of the worst epidemic of the 20th century, AIDS. This new phenomenon, the entrance of gay men --and those living with HIV-- into older age, is as shattering as the gay liberation movement was 40 years ago.

Over the summer, Jesus Ramirez-Valles, professor and director of the Community Health Sciences division, was the recipient of a fellowship that allowed him a month-long residency at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy. The Center supports the work of scholars, artists, thought leaders, policymakers, and practitioners who share in the Foundation's pioneering mission to promote the well-being of humanity around the world. It has a heightened focus on enabling individuals and organizations that are shaping thinking and catalyzing action around the Foundation's strategic goals of building resilience and advancing more inclusive economies. This was the second time that Dr. Ramirez-Valles received this prestigious fellowship.

Queer Aging is a book manuscript in which Dr. Ramirez-Valles examines the lives of older gay men members of the Baby Boomer generation, to whom he refers as Gayby Boomers. “The ultimate purpose of this research is to transform gerontology – the study of older age – by exposing its heteronormative basis and proposing ways to incorporate the experiences of queer folks,” says Dr. Ramirez-Valles. “I do this relying on the subjective experiences of Gayby Boomers: life histories of older gay men from diverse ethnic and social class backgrounds and HIV status.”

Dr. Ramirez-Valles completed the book's manuscript during his residency at the Center. “I read key literature, wrote and corrected a new chapter, and revised the rest of the book,” he said. His



Dr. Ramirez-Valles (right) with colleagues in Italy

colleagues included people from all over the world and variety of fields: the arts, humanities, global policy, and social sciences.

Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Dr. Mary Turyk is an associate professor of epidemiology. Her research focuses on the health impacts of exposure to persistent organic pollutants (POPs), such as polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs and the insecticide DDT. People are mainly exposed to POPs through contaminated foods, and in particular fish due to bioaccumulation through the marine food chain. These toxicants affect many biological systems including hormone regulation, glucose homeostasis, neurologic function and reproduction; some are known carcinogens.

Dr. Turyk's initial investigations documented effects of POP exposures and fish ingestion on thyroid and steroid hormone homeostasis in a cohort of Great Lakes sport fish consumers, in collaboration with Dr. Henry Anderson from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health and Dr. Victoria Persky from UIC. In 2008,



her work on hormone disruption by an emerging contaminant of concern, the flame retardant polybrominated diphenyl ethers or PBDEs, was the first major study published on this topic. Subsequently she led one of the first prospective investigations on the role of POP exposures in the development of diabetes, finding elevated diabetes risk in persons with greater exposure to DDE, a metabolite of DDT. Funding from

the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) supported her research on potential biological pathways mediating the association of POP exposures with diabetes. Results of this study suggested that POPs may have a stronger impact on blood glucose in persons at higher risk for diabetes.

Methyl mercury, another toxicant that bioaccumulates in fish, is also an area of interest. Dr. Turyk and UIC colleague Dr. Susan Buchanan were recently awarded a five-year grant from NIEHS to fund their project entitled "Promoting Healthy Seafood Choices in Asian Communities." This study will examine the health benefits and risks of seafood consumption. The objective of the project is to perform an in-depth characterization of exposure to mercury and PCBs from fish consumption in partnership with community based organizations who serve the Asian population in Chicago. The results will then be used to tailor public health text messages to the identified subgroups at risk, thereby decreasing their exposure to those contaminants while maintaining or improving their consumption of healthy nutrients from fish.

Dr. Turyk has also conducted research examining the impact of deteriorating housing conditions and allergens on asthma morbidity in Chicago communities in collaboration with Dr. Persky. In addition, they evaluated the effectiveness of home-based, multifaceted interventions in reducing asthma morbidity. These studies led to a greater understanding of determinants of disparities in asthma morbidity as well as strategies for implementing asthma interventions in challenged communities stressed by high mobility, violence and unemployment.

Division of Community Health Sciences

Dr. Yamile Molina is an assistant professor of community health sciences. She also serves as a Senior Research Specialist within the Center for Research on Women and Gender and as an Early Investigator/Academic Partner within the Cancer Center. Dr. Molina is committed to a career that highlights and incorporates individual and cultural protective factors among marginalized populations toward the goal of health equity, including communities of color, female communities, LGBTQ communities, and communities living with chronic conditions.

Dr. Molina is currently leading a National Cancer Institute-funded mixed method project in San Diego, CA that examines if and how participation in health-related outreach and activism is associated with adherence to guideline-concordant breast cancer screening among Latina and African American women and their families. They have identified potential mechanisms by which volunteerism is associated with better health, including greater exposure to screening guidelines and health-protective social norms as well as the pressure to serve as a role model. Such work aligns with secondary analyses Dr. Molina led as a postdoctoral fellow within the University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, which identified how health-protective social norms and self-efficacy underlie relationships between social factors and cancer-related care among women of color.

Dr. Molina is also a lead sociobehavioral researcher in a National Institutes of Health-funded effort to reduce the burden of HIV on Peruvian gay/bisexual men and transgender women through early

treatment of acute infection. This transdisciplinary team of Peru- and US-based investigators has found that how individuals cope in general before an HIV diagnosis is predictive of treatment initiation and may be particularly beneficial to address among vulnerable sub-populations, including individuals with substance use disorders. This work relates to other studies Dr. Molina and colleagues have conducted concerning the unique forms of discrimination LGBTQ-identified people of color face, including heterosexism within communities of color and racism within LGBTQ communities.

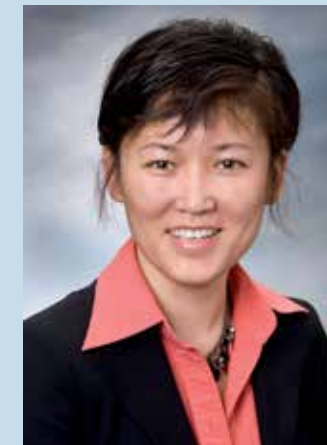
Within Chicago, Dr. Molina is developing an outreach and policy advocacy intervention with academic and community partners to support the agency and mobilization of local Latina and African American women and their communities within the context of early breast cancer detection. Another focus concerns the development of a holistic program for Chicago women living with HIV, which would support women's efforts in prevention of cancer and other co-morbidities. Finally, Dr. Molina is serving with other UIC members to evaluate interventions and programs concerning breast cancer and cardiovascular health in Illinois.



Division of Health Policy and Administration

Dr. Jun Ma, professor of health policy and administration and Co-Director of the Center for Research on Health and Aging in the Institute for Health Research and Policy, is a dually trained MD and PhD scientist with expertise in preventive medicine, nutrition science, and biometry. Dr. Ma has devoted her career to developing new knowledge in precision lifestyle medicine science and translating it into clinical and public health practice to promote patient-centered population health management and health equality.

Prior to joining UIC in August 2015, Dr. Ma was a senior scientist at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute and a consulting professor at Stanford University School of Medicine. Dr. Ma continues to hold consulting appointments at both institutions. Over the past 15 years, Dr. Ma has established a solid and progressive portfolio that embodies an integrative and transformative approach to actionable research, education, and



outreach. Her Precision Lifestyle Medicine research portfolio is designed to: (1) Accelerate the process of translating medical research discoveries into treatments for diverse patient populations; (2) Train a new generation of clinical and translational researchers; and (3) Engage stakeholders and communities in clinical studies and dissemination and implementation efforts.

Dr. Ma's research seeks to advance scientific understanding of the sociocontextual forces that influence healthcare provider and consumer behavior as well as the neurobiological mechanisms of behavior change, and to improve people's health and quality of life through prevention and high-value patient care in primary care settings and communities. She has led numerous federally funded randomized controlled clinical trials in different disease areas, including, but not limited to, obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and depression. She has successfully integrated Internet and mobile technologies into the lifestyle interventions evaluated in those trials to promote healthy eating, physical activity, and behavioral self-management. Dr. Ma believes that the pivotal role of high-quality, efficient primary care in the prevention and control of lifestyle-related major public health problems and in the eventual elimination of health inequalities further escalates in the new paradigm of accountable health care and patient-centered population health management. In addition, her research has recently forayed into mechanistic explorations, including a new major award through the National Institutes of Health Office of the Director for the Science of Behavior Change Initiative Program that will uncover the neurophysiological self-regulation mechanisms in behavior therapy for adults with comorbid obesity and depression.

Dr. Ma enthusiastically expects these new research directions to complete the spectrum of her translational research portfolio spanning from laboratory discoveries to human intervention studies to clinical practice and eventually to population health. As someone firmly committed to career mentoring, she expects such a broad-spectrum translational paradigm will offer unparalleled educational and training opportunities for students and young researchers at UIC.

Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Dr. Linda Forst, professor of environmental and occupational health sciences, has spent 25 years at UIC studying how work and health are integrally related. Work is a determinant of health in that job activities expose working people to illness and injury risks: those who are exposed to chemical, biological, physical, ergonomic, and psychosocial hazards are more likely to experience adverse health effects associated with those hazards. Health is affected by employment status, too, and whether an individual is employed, unemployed, partially employed, or stably employed has an impact on his/her health and well-being.

Employment in the U.S. is integrally related to health insurance coverage for both general health and work-related injury/illness (WRIL), and health care coverage determines whether an individual has access to care or whether optimal health outcomes can be achieved as a result of a clinical encounter. Dr. Forst and colleague Dr. Lee Friedman serve as bona fide agents of the Illinois Department of Public Health. They are conducting a state-based surveillance, which looks at numbers, rates, trends, causes and outcomes of WRILs in partnership with government agencies, employers, community-based organizations, and unions. She studies impairment rating systems and workers' compensation coverage.

There is a lack of training in Occupational Medicine among practicing physicians in the U.S. and worldwide, which adversely impacts health outcomes of WRIL and management of chronic illnesses at work. As the Director of the Great Lakes Center's World Health Organization Collaborating Center in Occupational

Health, Dr. Forst has developed, evaluated, and taught several curricula for primary care and public health providers on Occupational Medicine.

The workplace is increasingly being utilized as a venue for health promotion activities. Wellness programs are being implemented to prevent and control chronic health conditions based on the belief that a healthy workforce is a more productive workforce and will cost employers money due to absenteeism, low productivity, and health insurance costs. Dr. Forst has conducted intervention studies to narrow health inequities between low wage working populations—Hispanic, foreign born, and minority workers—and higher wage workers, implementing and evaluating community health worker programs in urban and rural settings. She continues

to practice clinical medicine in an urgent care center at O'Hare Airport as a faculty affiliate of the Department of Emergency Medicine and to train physicians in the Occupational Medicine Residency Program in Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences. ●



Striving to Understand (and Stop) Prostate Cancer

In the mid 1990s, Dr. Vince Freeman was a young physician pursuing his master's degree in public health at UIC SPH. An epidemiology assignment introduced him to stunning statistics, which remain so today: African American men are 2.4 times more likely to die of prostate cancer than white men.

Around the same time, two of Dr. Freeman's patients at the Veterans Health Administration underscored the fact that African Americans develop prostate cancer at much higher rates than in any other ethnic or racial group in the U.S. Both patients — middle-age, African American men from Gary, Ind. — appeared to be in good health, yet Dr. Freeman diagnosed one, then the other, with metastatic prostate cancer. In the interview for this article, Dr. Freeman stared at the floor in his office, shaking his head, remembering them.



Dr. Freeman

Over the past 20 years, Dr. Freeman, an associate professor of epidemiology in UIC SPH since 2004, has led or collaborated in studies addressing prostate cancer from many angles. He has studied the cells and molecules of thousands of prostate tumors. He has examined the influence of genetics, neighborhood income, health care systems and lifestyle on prostate cancer, the most common cancer among men, especially the black/white disparity in this cancer's incidence and survival rates.

More recently, Freeman has focused on the role of adiposity in prostate cancer. With a grant from the National Cancer Institute, Freeman led a team to examine why obese men with prostate cancer—even those with small tumors at the earliest stage—were more likely to develop progressive or fatal forms of the disease. The researchers enrolled a cohort of more than 220 men diagnosed with early-stage, localized prostate cancer and tracked them for 24 months after diagnosis. The team measured the amount and distribution of fat on the men's bodies several times during the two-year study period and conducted biochemical and molecular analyses of the men's tumors and fat tissue, among other work.

"We found a very strong association between the amount of body fat on men's bodies at the time of their cancer diagnosis and the likelihood of recurrence of their cancer, even after accounting for many factors, including age at diagnosis, race and ethnicity, the type of treatment received, cancer stage, tumor grade and other prognostic tumor characteristics," Dr. Freeman said. "Body fat is an independent predictor of prostate cancer recurrence."

Freeman's team also found a strong correlation between body fat and concentrations of inflammatory markers in prostate tissue, which may indicate a biological mechanism for development of the cancer.

Some good news emerged from the study as well. Participants who lost weight in the year after their cancer diagnosis did not see their cancer come back in the first or second year after diagnosis, Dr. Freeman said. Although this protective effect may extend beyond two years, the grant supporting their work did not allow the researchers to track further.

But the role of fat in prostate cancer suggests a potential path to intervene. Almost two of five African American men (37.9 percent) are obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Obesity interventions may help raise the survival rate among these men.

Preliminary results from this research were well received at the American Association on Cancer Research and other scientific conferences. Dr. Freeman is now writing the analyses for publication.

With funding from the American Cancer Society, he also is developing models to predict which areas within the Chicago area are future "hotspots" for advanced-stage prostate and colorectal cancer. ●

Dr. Vince Freeman's prostate cancer research was funded by the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health (No. R01CA129140) and supported by the Institute for Health Research and Policy.



Men who lose body fat within 12 months of being diagnosed with prostate cancer may prevent recurrence of the disease, according to a recent study by Dr. Vince Freeman, associate professor of epidemiology

Photo source, top right: Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

World Traveling Woman Gives Back

Having traveled to all seven continents, Donna Farley, PhD, MS, (MPH '75) has seen first-hand the value of global public health. When she generously included a gift of \$25,000 in her will to the UIC School of Public Health, she designated the funds to cover travel expenses to help students pursue their global health field placement or an internship. According to the school's Dean, Paul Brandt-Rauf, an increasing number of students are interested in global health and many will travel abroad as part of their practicum. "But the travel costs can be prohibitive," said Dr. Brandt-Rauf. "Thus, having scholarships for travel becomes critical in meeting the practicum and internship needs of these students and providing them with the best possible and most impactful training experience."

"This scholarship is an intersection of my three passions — public health, travel, and empowering people," Dr. Farley said. She encourages everyone to work and/or study overseas if they have the opportunity.

"I studied for six months in Costa Rica during college, which was a great experience." Dr. Farley also took what she called the "obligatory college summer trip to Europe." It was there that her



Dr. Farley having fun with lemurs in Madagascar

love of travel was born. "That was when I realized that history can actually be interesting, when you see it live."

Dr. Farley grew up in Park Ridge and, after finishing college and marrying, moved to Elk Grove Village where she raised her two children — Kristina (Tina), now 47; and William (Bill), now 45. She took a trip with Tina in August, to Denmark and Sweden.

In high school, Dr. Farley said she fell in love with biology. "I majored in biology in college, but didn't do much with it, in part because options for women were limited back then," she said. "I then did some volunteer work in public health and worked part time with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. I discovered I wanted to work in public health. So I went back to graduate school to get an MPH."

Dr. Farley said that she soaked up the knowledge from her classes at UIC SPH, specializing in environmental health. She believes that students who pursue a public health degree have "unending opportunities" ahead of them.

After graduate school, Dr. Farley worked for a year with the Illinois Pollution Control Board. She then switched concentrations and began working in healthcare, serving in several health care administration positions for almost 15 years.

"When I realized that my next job would have been running a hospital, I thought, 'I don't want to do this,'" Dr. Farley said. "So at age 46 (and now divorced) I went back to school at the RAND Graduate School and earned my PhD in public policy analysis."

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Dr. Farley visiting temples in Bagan, an ancient city located in the Mandalay Region of Burma

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Dr. Farley said she found her calling in health policy research. After three years on staff at a Congressional commission, she returned to RAND Health, where she worked for 14 years as a senior health policy researcher, before retiring in 2010. She's still adjunct staff at RAND and is also doing a limited amount of other independent consulting. "RAND is a wonderful place to work," she said. "It's an intellectual candy store for researchers with curiosity."

Now 72, Dr. Farley said she still has "itchy feet" and continues to travel actively. Although she claims not to be able to multi-task as well as she could when younger, she takes at least three international trips a year. Antarctica was my favorite destination," she said. "It's owned by the animals." Dr. Farley described leaving her ship in Antarctica and being visited by some of the natives. "I was sitting on a rock on a beach and suddenly I was surrounded by King Penguins, staring at me," she said. "If you take a step in their direction, they will take a step back. But they were fascinated with me."

She will travel to Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia in November for wildlife viewing, noting that "Wildlife photography is one of my hobbies."

Now that she lives in a retirement community in McMinnville, OR, she has neighbors who appreciate hearing about her stories and seeing the photos of her travels. "I finally found a receptive audience for my photos," she said.

"Having scholarships for travel becomes critical in meeting the practicum and internship needs of these students."

Dr. Farley said she also loves to read and does a lot of walking. And she enjoys exploring the area where she lives, which is right in the middle of Oregon wine country in Willamette Valley.

When looking back at the adventures of her life thus far, Dr. Farley said she owes a great debt to the UIC School of Public Health. "I have a growing realization about how important my MPH and my public health experience were for my personal and professional development," she said. "I wouldn't be where I am now without it. It was my launching pad."

As for any prospective students who are considering a degree in public health, Dr. Farley borrowed a slogan from a famous athletic company. "Just do it!" ●



The UIC School of Public health has been sustained through the years by the generous gifts of many faithful friends. We are proud to honor the distinguished group of leadership donors who, year after year, help the University to prepare our students for success. Membership in the Founders Circle recognizes donors who make annual gifts of \$500 or more. Benefits of membership include:

- Exclusive invitations to Founders Circle receptions
- Special communications from Dean Paul Brandt-Rauf
- Invitation to An Evening With Legacies and Leaders dinner



Create a better tomorrow for public health students, educators and the society they serve by including the UIC School of Public Health in your will today. You can direct your gift to any fund or program at the school, making college more affordable for students in need or supporting research that improves people's health and changes lives. Your gift will help prepare our next generation of leaders, thinkers and doers and inspire answers to tomorrow's biggest challenges.

Any member of the UIC School of Public Health community who confirms a planned gift by June 30, 2015 will become a Legacy Society Charter Member, and will be included on a plaque to be displayed in the school.

To learn more about the Founders Circle or Legacy Society, contact the Office of Advancement at SPHAdvancement@uic.edu.

Collaborative Project Receives Funding to Recruit Health Professionals

Health workforce needs in Illinois are expected to increase significantly due to aging of the population, general population growth, and advances in treatment and technology. It is projected that the anticipated increased patient demand, especially from historically underserved populations, through the Affordable Care Act, will be met with a decline in the number of available healthcare workers because of impending retirements. This will dramatically increase the burden on the existing model of health care providers who care for the nation's medically underserved population.



Student leaders involved in the programs offered by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion

In Chicago, where mortality rates for African Americans and Hispanics far exceed those of whites, residents of underserved communities face elevated rates of diabetes, asthma, hypertension, congestive heart failure, HIV/AIDS, and other chronic illnesses. Despite efforts to narrow the gap, health disparities have worsened over the last two decades. According to the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, failure to address current and projected health workforce shortages through pipeline and retention strategies may threaten the quality and availability of healthcare in the region and state, as well as the healthcare safety net.

"We will aim to increase minority enrollment and retention in the UIC health sciences colleges by increasing the number of competitive applications from historically underrepresented minorities."

"The UIC Health Professions Navigator project is a unique collaborative focused on improving the recruitment and retention of diverse students into the health science professional degree programs," explained Ebbin Dotson, Assistant Dean for Urban Health and Diversity Programs.

"The goal is to increase the diversity of UIC-trained health professionals that serve health professions shortage areas in Illinois." With a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the UIC School of Public Health will partner with the Colleges of Medicine and Dentistry to achieve two integrated goals.

"First, we will aim to increase minority student enrollment and retention in the UIC health sciences colleges by increasing the number of competitive applicants from traditional and non-traditional populations, especially historically underrepresented minorities, educationally and economically disadvantaged, first generation to college, and veterans," Dr. Dotson said. As the cost of a public health education increases and student debt mounts, it becomes increasingly important to find additional sources of student support both through grant funding and philanthropic gifts, as exemplified by this recent award from HRSA. "This is especially true if we are going to remain true to our intent to recruit and train students from underserved communities who will work at the front lines of eliminating health disparities," said Paul Brandt-Rauf, Dean of the School of Public Health.

The second goal of the project is to strengthen linkages with local and regional partners towards expanding practice-based and research experiences in underserved areas for students at college and graduate levels. Integrated programming will identify, recruit, and support the engagement of student participants into healthcare pathways that pipeline students between community college, four-year undergraduate, health science schools, and employment partners.

Collaborating with the Colleges of Medicine and Dentistry will allow for leveraging of partnerships from several community groups, including UIC's Urban Health Program, Mile Square Health Center, Hispanic Center of Excellence, Health Science Learning Exchange, Illinois Area Health Education Centers Network, Institute for Juvenile Research, and Center on Depression and Resilience. "Together, this project will strengthen practice-based experiences, continuous mentoring, financial support, and academic preparation that lead to successful careers in the health professions," said Dr. Dotson. ●



Dr. Ebbin Dotson

Inspiring Others to Be the Change They Wish to See in the World

Like most people who end up with a career in public health, Patrick Lenihan, PhD, aspired to be something else. “Few people start out saying ‘I want to be in public health.’ I wanted to be a doctor,” Dr. Lenihan recalls. Starting out as an engineering major, it was an economics course that opened his eyes to how the world really worked. He switched majors and earned degrees in economics and then urban planning. “I wanted to make a difference, one that was tangible and impacted populations rather than individuals. I realized that as interesting as it is, being a physician wasn’t enough for me.” Now, with a career in local public health spanning more than 25 years, he serves as director of the UIC School of Public Health’s Doctorate in Public Health Leadership (DrPH) Program.



Patrick Lenihan receiving the Maurice “Mo” Mullet Lifetime of Service Award at the 2015 Annual Conference of the National Association of County and City Health Officials

Dr. Lenihan’s first role with the School of Public Health was in the early 1990’s as an adjunct faculty member. “I taught a community health planning course while I was working at the health department,” he said. It was his unique background in planning and health needs assessment that caught the eye of Professor Barney Turnock who recruited Dr. Lenihan to the school. Once here, his role continued to grow: first being invited by then-Dean Susan Scrimshaw to lead the school’s strategic planning efforts, to eventually being invited to direct the DrPH Program. “The program was being restructured and was at a stage where we wanted to really differentiate it from the PhD program,” Dr. Lenihan says. “We wanted to make the program more practice-based.” Now, it is one of only three fully online DrPH programs offered in the U.S., with nine faculty and more than 90 students from across the country and in other parts of the world.

Dr. Lenihan was one of the longest-serving deputy health commissioners in the history of the Chicago Department of Health. Last summer, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) honored him with the Maurice

“Mo” Mullet Lifetime of Service Award for his noteworthy service to local public health and NACCHO. While at NACCHO, for which he served as president in 2002-2003, he managed the organization’s response to bioterrorism. He advanced local public health practice in developing and then evaluating Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships, a community-driven strategic planning process for improving community health used by hundreds of local public health agencies nationwide. Dr. Lenihan also directed the production of three editions of the Big Cities Health Inventory, a compendium of health statistics of the national’s largest urban areas, published by NACCHO.

Locally, Dr. Lenihan pioneered regional public health preparedness achieving designation for the Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium as “Public Health Ready,” a criteria-based public health preparedness program that assesses local health department capacity to plan for, respond to, and recover from public health emergencies.

Dr. Lenihan says his strength is his ability to bridge the gap between academia and public health practice. “I’m not a researcher, nor really an academic. My experience has allowed me to see both sides,” he says. His role with the DrPH program is to make sure the students develop the leadership skills they need to drive change and contribute to the evidence base of practice. Being able to speak truth to power is something he learned because of his background in economics. “General assemblies and city councils don’t listen as intently if you can’t speak about the financial side of public health problems – money talks.” His approach to community health planning certainly comes from his unique perspective.

“[We should] be the change [we] hope to see in the world and I hope this will inspire other faculty and even students to do the same. There is an obligation to be an ambassador and give back.”

Despite all of Dr. Lenihan’s accomplishments and contributions to the field of public health, he says it’s not enough. “If this work is to continue, we have to be able to generate the necessary resources, and you can’t be credible asking other people and foundations to support this work without supporting it yourself.” Last spring, Dr. Lenihan added the school to his estate plan, leaving a generous gift to help ensure the DrPH Program has the resources to continue the work it has started. Because of this gift, Dr. Lenihan is a charter member of the school’s Legacy Society, a special group recognizing anyone who has included the school in his or her estate plan. Taking inspiration from Ghandi, Dr. Lenihan aspires, at this stage of his career, to be the change he hopes to see in the world. “I hope my gift will inspire other faculty and even students to do the same. There is an obligation to be an ambassador and give back.” ●

UIC Establishes New Coordinating Center for Public Health Practice

According to the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH), public health practice is the strategic, organized, and interdisciplinary application of knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to perform essential public health services and other activities to improve the population’s health. For many years, the UIC School of Public Health (SPH) has envisioned creating a system of coordination and communication between the practice and academic communities that maximizes their respective strengths and contributes to health improvement.

“Based on our strategic planning process, along with feedback from our practice centers, faculty and other schools of public health, we determined that a center is needed to coordinate and communicate existing practice functions and capabilities with one voice within and outside the school,” said Richard Sewell,



Griselle Torres (DrPH ‘14, MPH ‘06), Director of the Coordinating Center for Public Health Practice, and Richard Sewell, Associate Dean for Community and Public Health Practice

Associate Dean for Community and Public Health Practice. “The Center will maintain, improve and develop strategic opportunities to assure our continued relevance in preparing public health professionals and working meaningfully with the public health practice community.”

This vision became a reality in September when the school hired Griselle Torres (DrPH ‘14, MPH ‘06) as the new Director of the Coordinating Center for Public Health Practice. Under Dr. Torres’ leadership, UIC SPH is positioned to be the primary source and venue for public health practice and academic innovation in Illinois.

“The school has become a triple threat, known for its teaching, research and service,” says Dr. Torres. “The Center itself can serve as a coordinating hub among these three areas, especially honing in on implementation science.” UIC SPH already has research that informs teaching and practice, but Dr. Torres says there is a need for implementation science to inform research,

“The Center will maintain, improve and develop strategic opportunities to assure our continued relevance in preparing public health professionals and working meaningfully with the public health practice community.”

teaching and practice itself. “It’s a quality improvement cycle necessary to ensure that these areas are driving one another.”

A significant part of the UIC SPH strategic plan focuses on content related to public health practice, specifically disseminating knowledge between the school and its internal and external partners. “This includes partnering with other colleges, health agencies, international and community-based organizations, and policy makers,” Dr. Torres explains. As one of seven health sciences colleges on campus that are part of the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System, UIC SPH will be in a unique position to quickly begin to take advantage of opportunities for partnership.

The Center has three main goals. First is to become a leader in public health practice-based research and in dissemination and translation of UIC faculty research about health and health systems. To achieve this goal, UIC SPH will develop strategic partnerships with faculty, alumni, and health-related agencies, launching an active public health practice-based research network.

Secondly, the Center will become a leader in public health workforce development by developing a statewide workforce development training plan aligned with the intergovernmental agreement the school has with the Illinois Department of Public Health. Lastly, the Center will be a leading provider and partner for innovative assessment, planning, and evaluation services conducted with public health organizations, expanding current services to include emerging approaches such as health impact assessment and public health department accreditation support.

“Achieving these goals will require an intentional effort in coordination, development, and strategic management of the UIC SPH practice and practice-based research functions,” explains Mr. Sewell. “And given our commitment to collaboration, I look forward to seeing this Center be a model for collaboration in the state of Illinois.” ●

Healthy Illinois 2021:

Developing a State Health Improvement Plan

For many years, the UIC School of Public Health (UIC SPH) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) have worked together to improve the health of residents in Illinois. This relationship works in many ways – by providing expertise between institutions, collaborating on research or programmatic efforts, and sharing knowledge. Under an Intergovernmental Agreement between UIC SPH and IDPH, the school’s MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice (MCPHP) is currently taking the lead on a statewide health improvement planning process called Healthy Illinois 2021.

Healthy Illinois 2021 represents three statewide efforts seeking to improve the health of the public: the State Health Assessment, State Health Improvement Plan, and State Innovation Model. These processes are designed to help stakeholders understand the current state of health in Illinois and establish health improvement strategies that address needs and gaps, and engage all aspects of the public health system. Healthy Illinois 2021 is spearheaded by the Illinois Department of Public Health, in coordination with the Illinois Governor’s Office. The MCPHP facilitates the planning process. The initiative is also guided by a Governor’s office appointed Planning Council made up of representatives from state agencies, local health departments, community-based organizations, health plans, universities, and other stakeholders.

The three elements of Healthy Illinois 2021 are distinct, but related and integrated. The State Health Assessment is a systematic approach to collecting data used to educate and mobilize communities, as well as develop priorities to improve the public’s health. The State Health Improvement Plan is a five-year plan that addresses issues identified in the State Health Assessment and provides strategies for how agencies and communities can work together to improve health. The State Innovation Model (SIM) project makes recommendations for improving health delivery systems, improving health outcomes, and lowering health care costs. The SIM will include a Plan for Population Health that addresses how to improve population health outcomes and will use the data from the State Health Assessment and the strategies established through State Health Improvement Plan as a foundation.

Each component of Healthy Illinois 2021 can be thought of as a phase of the health improvement planning process. The State Health Assessment gathers a comprehensive set of data needed to assess the current state of health, such as data related to social determinants of health, health behaviors and health outcomes. The State Health Improvement Plan identifies and selects strategies that will help achieve the state’s health improvement goals. The Plan for Population Health within the State Innovation Model provides a picture of how clinical and preventive interventions will work together to achieve population health improvement.

The integration of the clinical and preventive care is an important outcome of this process that aligns with health care transformation efforts across the nation. In order to make sustainable progress towards population health improvement, transformation is necessary in all aspects of the public health system. This includes what happens in a clinical setting, like a doctor’s office or hospital, as well as prevention efforts led by community-based organizations or health departments. Traditionally, planning around clinical and preventive interventions has been done in siloes. A concerted effort to integrate these plans is a step toward reforming the entire system.



The UIC School of Public Health staff leading the efforts of Healthy Illinois 2021 are Jen McGowan, Christina Welter, Deb Rosenberg, and Geneva Porter (not pictured are Linda Rosul and Steve Seweryn)

MCPHP began working specifically on the Healthy Illinois 2021 initiative in February 2015. Christina Welter, director of the MCPHP, has guided the process by leveraging her expertise in health improvement planning. “We provided a framework for the planning process and developed recommendations for the design. In the early stages of Healthy Illinois 2021, we worked to establish relationships within the Department of Public Health in order to facilitate this process moving forward,” she says.

The MCPHP’s role has been to work with IDPH to design the planning process. Key principles have been developed for this process, including utilizing already-existing local and regional strategies, and leveraging assets and opportunities for health

“Aligning the School of Public Health with the priorities of the Department of Public Health is an important part of maintaining our relationship with IDPH and ensuring that public health work in our state is coordinated.”

improvement that are apparent at the state level. There are several models for health improvement planning at the local level, and health departments across the state use them regularly. As a requirement for state funding, local health departments must complete a needs assessment, called the

Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs, or IPLAN. Similarly, hospitals complete Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) and Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) for their hospital service areas. Local health departments and hospitals commonly use the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process to complete these requirements. Using a hybrid of the MAPP process, MCPHP has tailored this nationally recognized model to meet the needs of a statewide plan, as opposed to a community-specific plan.

The work on the State Health Assessment has been a true collaboration between the Illinois Department of Public Health and the School of Public Health. In particular, Deb Rosenberg, Research Associate Professor, Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the School of Public Health, has been instrumental in working with the IDPH to develop statewide indicators that not only help tell the story of health in Illinois, but will also help track and monitor the health status of Illinois residents over subsequent years. Through detailed conversations with the state’s data scientists, the MCPHP team has helped develop a template and framework for creating this set of indicators based on the available data within the department.

While this larger set of indicators meant to provide a comprehensive look at the state of health in Illinois is still in development, a snapshot of this story has been created using currently available data. MCPHP has also engaged in a review of state agency and public health system strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to health improvement. The review considered more than 30 state agency or organization needs assessments, strategic plans, and operational plans and categorized this information into an analysis that reflects assets, opportunities and barriers. Both the snapshot of the current state of health and the analysis of assets, opportunities and barriers have been shared with the Healthy Illinois 2021 Planning Council for the purposes of developing a list of health issues affecting the overall health of Illinois residents. The Planning Council used this information and their own experiences to provide early guidance on the potential health priorities that the State of Illinois should address through the State Health Improvement Plan over the next five years.

Over the summer, the MCPHP team traveled across the state conducting focus groups with stakeholders, seeking opinions on the snapshot of the current state of health, and

perceptions of strengths, opportunities, and threats to health improvement. Focus group work centered on identifying current strategies used at the local or regional level to address health improvement. In addition to focus groups, webinars and presentations have been held for organizations interested in providing feedback. All of the input received will be shared with the Healthy Illinois 2021 Planning Council and incorporated into the State Health Assessment product, and will help inform the strategies for health improvement that are included in the State Health Improvement Plan. As strategies are selected for inclusion in the State Health Improvement Plan, action teams will be developed to focus on implementation of the plan. Action teams will include members of the Healthy Illinois 2021 Planning Council and other stakeholders.



Representatives from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Chinese American Service League present information collected during the Healthy Illinois 2021 planning process to a group of seniors at a meeting in September

A critical step in this process is encouraging organizations to align their work with statewide health priorities. Given the School of Public Health’s commitment to working with IDPH, a specific effort to align with the State Health Improvement Plan will also be launched. “Depending on the outcome of the process, the school can align research or practice goals with the health priorities, or may consider our own physical environment through efforts like adding additional bike racks in front of the School. Aligning the School of Public Health with the priorities of the Department of Public Health is an important part of maintaining our relationship with IDPH and ensuring that public health work in our state is coordinated,” says Lorraine Conroy, Senior Associate Dean of UIC SPH.

Organizations that have participated in focus groups, webinars, or presentations have already been encouraged to think about aligning their work with the State Health Improvement Plan. IDPH and MCPHP will continue to urge participation and alignment throughout the planning process. Annual updates to the State Health Assessment are planned to help the Illinois Department of Public Health evaluate progress. At the end of this process, IDPH and partners statewide will be ready to take action in a coordinated fashion towards health improvement of Illinois residents. ●

Celebrating the Achievements of Students, Alumni, Faculty and Staff

SARA AGATE (MPH '14) received the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellowship for 2015 – 2016.

The Wisconsin Environmental Health Association has named Rock County Health Department Environmental Health Director **TIMOTHY BANWELL** (MPH '80) Environmental Health Professional of the Year. Only one person a year receives the statewide award.



Sarah Wagener, Iqra Mushtaq, and H.B. Riley

Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers President and CEO **JOHN BARTKOWSKI** (DrPH '96) received his honorary doctoral degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin.

EMILY BEAUREGARD (MPH '08) has joined Kentucky Voices for Health as its new executive director, bringing strong skills in leadership, strategic planning, change management and quality improvement.

AMANDA BENITEZ (MPH '11) was recently named Director of Youth Programs and Program Planning and Evaluation at Gads Hill Center.

JAY BHATT, DO, (MPH '08), MPA, FACP, received the Walter J. McDonald Award for Young Physicians, which was given by the American College of Physicians.

JOHN CAPUA (MPH '15) was offered a job as a Junior Epidemiologist for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. He will be working within the Research and Surveillance Unit in the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Use Prevention, Care & Treatment.

FRED CARLSON (MPH '75) relocated from Chicago to Arizona. With a group of fellow hikers, he completed a twenty-four mile one-day hike from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon to the South Rim.

NOEL CHAVEZ, associate professor of Community Health Sciences, is the 2015 recipient of the Sarah Samuels Award by the American Public Health Association Food and Nutrition Section. This award celebrates individuals who affect nutrition policy, advocacy, and evaluation, particularly at the local and state level.

Tyme, Inc., a research and development company focused on developing drug candidates for the treatment of cancer, has appointed **GIUSEPPE DEL PRIORE**, MD, (MPH '92) to serve on its Medical Advisory Board. Dr. Del Priore, a renowned gynecologic oncologist, researcher and teacher, is the National Director of Gynecologic Oncology and Southeastern Regional Director at Cancer Treatment Centers of America.

The Gerontological Society of America has chosen **XINGI DONG**, MD, (MPH '10) as the 2015 recipient of the Joseph T. Freeman Award. This honor is awarded to a prominent physician in the field of aging—both in research and practice—who is a member of the Society's Health Sciences section.

SAMUEL DOREVITCH, MD, MPH, Associate Professor, has been named interim director of the Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences at the UIC School of Public Health. Dr. Dorevitch's areas of interest include water quality, environmental health, and climate change.

JUSTIN FORD (MS '05) has joined Grain Processing Corporation's Environmental Department as senior environmental specialist.

JASON GRINTER, DDS, (MPH '10) is serving as LIBERTY Dental Director for the state of Illinois.

MICHELE KELLEY, associate professor of community health sciences, received the Insley Evans Public Health Social Worker of the Year, given by the Award's Committee of the Public Health Social Work Section of the American Public Health Association.

SHEILA MALKIND (MPH '95) is Executive Director of the Legacy Film Festival on Aging, which aims to educate, entertain, and inspire intergenerational audiences about the issues of aging.



Lisa M. Powell

SUZET MCKINNEY (DrPH '09), MPH, was named the new Executive Director of Illinois Medical District Commission.

NAOKO MURAMATSU, associate professor of community health sciences, became a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). GSA, the nation's largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to the field of aging, gives the status of fellow as an acknowledgment of outstanding and continuing work in gerontology.

IQRA MUSHTAQ, MPH candidate in healthy policy and administration, **H.B. RILEY**, MPH/MSW candidate in community health sciences, and **SARAH WAGENER**, MPH candidate in community health sciences, have been chosen as 2015-16 Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows. The program is dedicated to developing a pipeline of emerging professionals who enter the workforce with the skills and commitment necessary to address unmet health needs.

PETER ORRIS, MD, MPH, FACP, FACOEM, professor of environmental and occupational health sciences, has been selected as the 2015 recipient of the Alice Hamilton Award given by the Occupational Health and Safety Section of the American Public Health Association. This award recognizes the life-long contributions of individuals who have distinguished themselves through a career of hard work and dedication to improve the lives of workers.

JANKI PATEL DO, (MPH '02), an infectious disease specialist, has joined Mayo Clinic Health System in Eau Claire.

LISA M. POWELL, Ph.D., professor, began serving as the new Director of the division of Health Policy and Administration on August 16, 2015.

KRISTIN PULATIE, JD, (MPH '12) has been named by Montrose County as the new director for its Health and Human Services Department.

JOHN QUINN, MD, (MPH '07) established the Prague Center for Global Health where they conduct research based on regional health issues like migration, the war in Ukraine, ISIS in Europe and the current refugee crisis.



Liz Thompson

BayCare Health System has named **ED RAFALSKI** (PhD '07) as chief strategy and marketing officer.

Leading Healthy Futures, a collaborative consulting practice that helps leaders shape the futures of health, K-12 education, and human services organizations, has welcomed **RACHEL SACKS** (MPH '11) as a new full-time consultant.

CHRISTINA SANSONE (MPH '15) accepted the position of Project Coordinator/Analyst at Office of the Chief Judge, Illinois Circuit Court of Cook County.



Zane Wang Zhengyu



Nazanin Tondravi

ALLEN SMART (MPH '95) is the recipient of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine's first Excellence in Health Policy award.

LOREEN TARGOS (MS '15) was recently named Physical Scientist (Environmental) at the Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes National Program Office.

LIZ THOMPSON (MPH '13) was named one of Windy City Times' 30 Under 30.

NAZANIN TONDRABI, JD, (MPH '14) is the new Associate Director of the Regulatory Compliance Division in the Department of Medical Compliance Services at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. In her new role, she will be responsible for ensuring that the University continues to be in compliance with Federal and State health care laws, such as the Stark Law, and the Anti-Kickback Statute.

MARISA YOUNG, MD, (PhD '15) is doing a Residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Emory University. She and her husband, **DR. WALTER OBIERO**, who is a PhD candidate in health policy and administration, are the proud new parents of a healthy baby boy as of September 23, 2015.

ZANE WANG ZHENGYU (PhD '95, MS '91) is the founder and chief executive of China Rapid Finance, a new online personal finance platform that he hopes will make positive changes to the Chinese financial system.

Tell us what you're up to!
Email your news to TellSPH@uic.edu.

Meet the New Alumni Board Members

The UIC School of Public Health is pleased to announce the addition of six new members to the Alumni Board.



MARISSA D. SANDERS, MPH '03 ▲

Ms. Sanders serves as the Vice President in Healthcare Risk Management for Mesirow Financial with expertise in clinical risk management and loss control, which includes strategic planning, quality improvement, and data analysis. In her role, she works with healthcare facilities, including physician practices, hospitals, nursing homes, health clinics and rehabilitation centers to identify and mitigate areas of vulnerability and to ensure compliance with regulatory and accrediting organizations.

REBECCA LEVIN, MPH '02 ▲

Ms. Levin is the Strategic Director of the Injury Prevention and Research Center at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago where she founded and directs the citywide violence prevention collaborative Strengthening Chicago's Youth.

**GRISELLE TORRES, ▲
DRPH '14, MPH '06**

Dr. Torres is Director of the new Coordinating Center for Public Health Practice at the UIC School of Public Health. In this role she will work to position UIC SPH to be a primary source and venue for public health practice and academic innovation in Illinois. Prior to joining UIC, she was at the Chicago Department of Public Health for more than sixteen years where she worked on issues ranging from workforce development, performance management and quality improvement, HIV prevention and public health accreditation.



**LAVERNE BARNES, ▲
DO, MPH '94**

Dr. Barnes works at Franciscan Alliance as an Urgent Care Physician. She is also a consultant in the Disability Quality Branch of The Social Security Administration as well as the Chief Operating Officer for "The Encounter Group," a Healthcare Leadership Consulting Company.

▲ JEANITA MOORE, MPH '14, CHES

Ms. Moore is the current Lead Community Resource Educator at Saint Anthony Hospital where she spearheads community benefit services, public health programs in community health, and program development and evaluation.

◀ SUSAN H. GAWEL, PHD '10, MS

Dr. Gawel is a Statistical Project Manager at Abbott Laboratories Diagnostics Division, focusing on the discovery, validation and qualification of biomarkers. She is also currently teaching future clinicians and clinical researchers in the art of study design and advanced quantitative methods as an Adjunct Professor at the Institute of Public Health and Medicine at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine.

2015-2016

Founders Circle and Legacy Society Reception

The Annual Founders Circle and Legacy Society Reception was held at the Glessner House Museum on October 8, 2015. More than 60 guests joined other generous supporters of the school and senior UIC School of Public Health administrators and faculty for a state of the school presentation by Dean Paul Brandt-Rauf. Guests enjoyed a tour of the of Glessner House, which is a National Historic Landmark designed by noted American architect Henry Hobson Richardson and completed in 1887. It remains an internationally known architectural treasure in Chicago that served as an inspiration to the young Frank Lloyd Wright and helped redefine domestic architecture.



For more information about the Founders Circle or Legacy Society, contact the Office of Advancement at SPHAdvancement@uic.edu.

Glessner House



Connect and Engage



HEALTHY SPIRITS

Alumni gathered at Plymouth Rooftop Bar on May 14, 2015



HEALTHY SPIRITS

Alumni gathered at Goose Island on September 9, 2015



ALUMNI RECEPTION IN DENVER

The School of Public Health hosted a dinner for alumni living in the Denver area and those who attended the Society for Epidemiologic Research Conference on June 18, 2015

For more information on all of these events, visit publichealth.uic.edu/alumni.

Join us for one of our upcoming events.

FEBRUARY 11, 2016
5:30 PM – 8 PM
Gaming for the Greater Good
Headquarters Beercade – Lakeview
2833 N. Sheffield Ave.
Chicago, IL 60657

MARCH 3, 2016
6 PM: Lecture
7:15 PM: International Night
Alumni Learning Series Lecture & International Night
UIC School of Public Health
1603 W. Taylor St.
Chicago, IL 60612

MARCH 31, 2016
6 PM – 10 PM
Annual Alumni Celebration
Save the Date

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK
APRIL 4-10, 2016

APRIL 5, 2016
12 PM – Poster Viewing
2:30 PM – Awards Ceremony
Research and Practice Forum & Awards Day
UIC School of Public Health
1603 W. Taylor St.
Chicago, IL 60612

APRIL 6, 2016
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Women in Public Health Panel
UIC School of Public Health Auditorium
1603 W. Taylor St.
Chicago, IL 60612

APRIL 7, 2016
8:30 AM – 5 PM
Minority Health Conference
Save the Date

MAY 6, 2016
3:30 PM
Commencement
UIC Forum
725 W. Roosevelt Road
Chicago, IL 60607

MAY 12, 2016
5:30 PM – 8 PM
Healthy Spirits
Plymouth Rooftop Bar
325 S. Plymouth Court
Chicago, IL 60604



2016 Calendar of Events

JANUARY 2016						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

FEBRUARY 2016						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

MARCH 2016						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

APRIL 2016						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

MAY 2016						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
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JUNE 2016						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Founders Circle and Legacy Society Events

These events are open to alumni and friends who make annual gifts of \$500 or more, or have included the UIC School of Public Health in their estate plan. To learn more about joining these groups, contact us at SPHAdvancement@uic.edu.

★ **March 3, 2016**
5 PM – 6 PM
Private Alumni Learning Series
Speaker Meet & Greet
The Dean's Office, #1175
UIC School of Public Health
1603 W. Taylor St.
Chicago, IL 60612

★ **April 7, 2016**
5 PM – 9 PM
An Evening with
Legacies and Leaders
UIC Forum
725 W. Roosevelt Road
Chicago, IL 60607



ADLER AFTER DARK

Members of the Recent Graduate Board hosted a fun evening at the Adler Planetarium on July 16, 2015

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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