



# IGNITE

THE CAMPAIGN FOR UIC

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
ILLINOIS  
CHICAGO  
SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH



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# HEALTHVIEWS

**DEAN DR. WAYNE H. GILES  
DISCUSSES THE APPEAL OF UIC**

*Inside This Issue*

- UIC Establishes New Health Equity Research Center
- Environmental Health Center Studies Effects of Pollution
- Global Health Course Brings Students to Cuba



# 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 Gayatri Sanku, MPH candidate in Epidemiology who is also pursuing the Pharmacoepidemiology certificate in the College of Pharmacy and Global Health Certificate. She is currently a USA David L. Boren Fellow working in Rio de Janeiro and studying the Zika Virus. The border wall between Israel and the West Bank is marked with graffiti from international and local travelers. The wall separates businesses, families, and communities, this representing the gross neglect of the Palestinian people who have lived as refugees for generations without the basic necessities of life.



# HEALTHVIEWS

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It is a pleasure to be writing my first Dean's Desk for this issue of *Healthviews*. I am so excited to begin this journey as your new dean! I've enjoyed connecting with many alumni, donors and friends over the past several weeks, and look forward to meeting many more. While there is much to learn about the UIC School of Public Health, who we are as a community, and who we want to be to advance public health, I already know that my decision to move here was the right one. You can read more about my vision for UIC SPH on pages 4-5.



Also in this issue of *Healthviews*, you'll read about UIC's new health equity research center, which is being co-lead by Professor and Director of Community Health Sciences, Dr. Jesus Ramirez-Valles. The center, featured on page 3, will initially focus on three research projects that address health and structural violence—a term that describes the multiple characteristics of risks leading to increased morbidity and mortality.

What are your thoughts on the sugary drink tax? UIC SPH is proud to have Dr. Lisa Powell, Professor and Director of Health Policy and Administration, working to study whether this tax will have an impact on the public's health. Check out a Q & A with Dr. Powell on pages 6-7.

I'm told that the National Scope/Global Impact section of the magazine is always a favorite among our readers because it provides a glimpse of what our students and faculty are doing around the world. Check out pages 12-15 to read about a new course that allowed our students to travel to Cuba, and to view a photo essay by one of our doctoral candidates who traveled to Kenya.

The Advancing Health section showcases the variety of reasons why someone chooses to financially support UIC SPH. On pages 16-17, you'll read about how private philanthropy supported the school's first endowed lectureship. You'll also read about our inaugural gala for our Cure Violence program. And you'll begin seeing a new logo for UIC SPH that will help promote UIC's new fundraising campaign, IGNITE: The Campaign for UIC, which publically launched on October 28, 2017. More to come in our Spring issue of *Healthviews* about the specific fundraising priorities and goals for UIC SPH.

Lastly, I hope you'll take a moment to check out the photos on pages 24-25 to see some of the events we hosted in recent months. I look forward to seeing you at one of the many events we have planned during the coming year.

*Wayne H. Giles MD, MS*

Wayne H. Giles, MD, MS  
Dean, UIC School of Public Health

**ON THE COVER**  
Dean Giles, center, with public health student leaders.



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 controversial sugary drink tax has been repealed in Cook County. Should states and localities consider taxing sugar-sweetened beverages to promote public health?



Members of the UIC SPH community weigh in....

Taxing sugary beverages is a good option for states and localities interested in curbing consumption and its consequences, including type 2 diabetes and obesity. Experiences from Mexico show that their tax has been



very effective in reducing consumption, particularly in lower-income households and among heavier consumers.

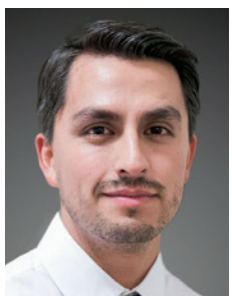
**FRANK CHALOUPKA**  
RESEARCH PROFESSOR  
OF HEALTH POLICY AND  
ADMINISTRATION

In order to truly change consumer behavior and create healthy communities, we must address the overarching public health issue. The higher prevalence of sugar consumption-related ailments like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease has been related to limited access to healthy foods and beverages particularly among the low-income and minority populations. Local leaders should take these environmental factors into consideration when evaluating the proposed beverage tax.



**KESHONNA A. LONES**  
MASTER OF HEALTHCARE  
ADMINISTRATION '13

Sugar consumption has serious health and historical implications. How do we expect to tax a product if we subsidize its resource? Similarly, an underfunded, underrepresented community cannot flourish if they alone are expected to bear the cost.



**JUAN WANTIG**  
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
CANDIDATE

While the sugary drink tax was unsuccessful in Cook County, the data shows that this type of tax has been effective at reducing consumption of high calorie drinks elsewhere. I believe that this is the first step towards healthier communities, however supportive initiatives are necessary to incentivize healthier choices at the individual level. Utilizing the new revenue towards price reduction of fruits and vegetables is one way to support healthier lifestyles.



**LIZ BRANN**  
MASTER OF HEALTHCARE  
ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE

New Health Equity Research Center Established at UIC



Dr. Ramirez-Valles

The University of Illinois at Chicago has received support from the National Institutes of Health to establish a specialized Center of Excellence in minority health and health disparities research. Called the Center for Health Equity Research, or CHER, the new center will investigate how various social structures and determinants contribute to the health of marginalized groups.

“The end-goal is to get to a point where my health and your health is not determined by the color of our skin, where we live, or who we live with,” said Jesus Ramirez-Valles, Professor and Director of Community Health Sciences. Additional studies and programs that promote minority health and reduce health disparities are already in the center’s pipeline.

“The reality is that the vast majority of preventable disease in the U.S. happens in a small group of minority communities and it’s not always because of biology alone,” said Dr. Robert Winn, associate vice chancellor for community based practice at UIC and director of the University of Illinois Cancer Center. “It’s also because these groups are socially disadvantaged due to geography, poverty or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation,” said Dr. Winn, the corresponding principal investigator on the grant.

Dr. Ramirez-Valles, who will lead the administrative core of the new center, says that Chicago’s highly segregated, urban environment provides a rich foundation for studying structural violence and public health, and that UIC’s “ability to bring together multidisciplinary researchers from diverse racial, ethnic and social backgrounds” gives strength to the center.

A growing body of scientific evidence strongly suggests that social determinants such as poverty, living in a food desert, lacking safe spaces to play and exercise, discrimination or growing up with neighborhood violence can contribute to the development of preventable diseases and conditions including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and substance abuse.

Seven UIC entities will collaborate on the center’s work: the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Medicine, College of Nursing, School of Public Health, UI Cancer Center, Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships, and Institute for Minority Health Research. UIC is one of 12 centers nationwide and the only in the Midwest to be funded by the NIH’s National Institute of Health and Health Disparities’ Center of Excellence program. The centers will share approximately \$82 million over five years. ●

“The end-goal is to get to a point where my health and your health is not determined by the color of our skin, where we live, or who we live with.”

CHER will initially focus on three research projects that address health and structural violence—a term that describes the multiple characteristics of social, economic and political systems that expose vulnerable communities to physical, socioeconomic, behavioral or psychosocial risks leading to increased morbidity and mortality.





# A New Era for UIC SPH

## Recently installed Dean, Dr. Wayne H. Giles, discusses the appeal of UIC and his vision for the school

By Daniel P. Smith

Barely two weeks into his new role as dean of the UIC School of Public Health, Dr. Wayne Giles stepped into a conference room at the school's 1603 W. Taylor Street building on September 15, and immediately began shaking hands and trading smiles with a small group of public health students gathered together for a meet and greet.

In a space overlooking Chicago's colorful urban landscape, symbolic of both the world's vast opportunities as well as its far-reaching challenges, the group devoted the next 45 minutes to earnest dialogue about the public health profession and the UIC experience. Dr. Giles detailed his own 25-year run at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and his recent shift into academia, while students discussed their favorite courses and potential career plans.

"It was immediately clear Dr. Giles was a really good listener who had a heart of service," said Kara Beskin, a third-year MPH/MBA student and president of the Public Health Student Association.

For Dr. Giles, the conversation proved both illuminating and inspirational, a swift exercise that cemented his soul-searching decision to swap a prominent leadership role in the nation's foremost health protection and prevention agency for a second act in university administration. "The level of the students' excitement and enthusiasm captivated me and reminded me why I made this move," Dr. Giles said.

When Dr. Giles received a call in 2016 to gauge his interest in the UIC SPH deanship, he was admittedly surprised. Though he possessed a lengthy history of performing community-based work and interacting with academic institutions, including UIC, he held no higher education experience. The metro Philadelphia native, in fact, had spent his entire professional career at the CDC, joining the agency in 1992 before ascending its ranks to lead its Division of Population Health and, later, its Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention.



**"The level of the students' excitement and enthusiasm captivated me and reminded me why I made this move."**

Academia's scholarly and research missions, however, intrigued Dr. Giles and UIC's pull proved powerful, particularly the school's strong national reputation and its diverse student body. These were important factors, particularly given Dr. Giles' impassioned interest in boosting minority numbers in the public health profession. Moreover, the school's research strength in areas such as HIV and violence prevention to health policy and healthy aging matched Dr. Giles' own scholarly interests.

Above all, though, Dr. Giles was energized by the potential opportunity to shepherd the next generation of public health practitioners. "That's always appealed to me," said Dr. Giles, who earned his MD from Washington University in St. Louis and a Masters in epidemiology from the University of Maryland. "We're seeing more and more young people mobilized toward healthy living and I wanted to join this exciting movement."

This past June, the 56-year-old Dr. Giles was named the sixth dean in UIC SPH's 47-year history and the first African American to hold the post. "Dr. Giles' extensive experience as director of the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention [at the CDC], his work in clinical trials for cholesterol drugs and in examining racial disparities in health make him a perfect fit for forwarding UIC's mission to protect and improve the health of the people of Chicago, the State of Illinois, and beyond through education, research, policy, and service," said UIC's Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs Dr. Robert Barish.

**"We absolutely need to do a much better job of making sure people understand and see the value of this institution. In some ways, this fantastic school feels invisible."**

On a cool September morning, Dr. Giles sits at a round table inside his 11th floor office, one peppered with abstract art and hardbound medical tomes. Contemplative and thoughtful, he begins to outline his broad vision for UIC SPH, one that starts with enhancing the student experience, including heightening access to scholarships and learning opportunities both local and abroad. He's interested in expanding the doctorate of public health program, which receives approximately 160 applicants each year for 16 slots, as well as increasing undergraduate enrollment. Today, he said, undergraduates represent less than 15 percent of the school's student body, a paltry number given surging youth interest in healthy lifestyles and big data, two hallmarks of the public health curriculum.

"With a growing national focus on health promotion and prevention, there's a greater opportunity to get students engaged with public health at a younger age, and we need to be involved in this effort," Dr. Giles said.



Dr. Wayne H. Giles, Dean of the UIC School of Public Health

He also wants to focus on faculty development, particularly at the junior level, providing more global health experiences and further elevating the school's robust research portfolio. "Coming from the funder side, I am keenly aware of what funders are looking for in

applicants and I want to use that to create an environment that supports the work of faculty members and provides them the resources they need," said Dr. Giles, a prolific researcher himself who claims more than 150 publications in peer-reviewed journals.

In addition, Dr. Giles aims to deepen community partnerships, specifically with a number of important national organizations headquartered in the Chicago area, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Alzheimer's Association and the YMCA of the USA. "I want us to think about being collaborative partners," said Dean Giles. The new dean also plans to lobby University administration to house UIC SPH in a single building as opposed to its current scattered arrangement.

It's an ambitious vision, Dr. Giles acknowledged, and one undeniably linked to elevating the school's public profile, especially in light of the recently announced Ignite capital campaign for which UIC SPH holds an \$85 million fundraising goal. "We absolutely need to do a much better job of making sure people understand and see the value of this institution," he said. "In some ways, this fantastic school feels invisible."

That's why Dr. Giles is particularly excited about the school's looming 50th anniversary in 2020, something he hopes UIC SPH can harness to boost its profile, share its message and charge into the future with greater confidence and clarity. "There are wonderful things happening at the UIC School of Public Health, many tied to improving the world and the human experience, but we need to get that message out there," he said. "Unquestionably, we're facing some headwinds, but the future is promising and I'm ready to get to work!" ●



# A Study of Sweet and Sugar

By Daniel P. Smith

**In spite of the repeal of Cook County's Sweetened Beverage Tax, Dr. Lisa Powell leads an expansive, multi-year project studying the impact of the headline-grabbing tariffs**

As summer transitioned into autumn in the Chicago area, it was difficult to escape talk of the Cook County "pop tax." The penny-per-ounce tax on sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks, flavored water and their liquid, sugar-infused brethren captured headlines and hot takes, criticism and commentary that, ultimately, proved so heated that Cook County leaders repealed the tax in October.

Prior to the rising discussion of the county's conversational levy, Dr. Lisa Powell, distinguished professor and division director of health policy and administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, received a \$4.9 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies for a time-sensitive—and undoubtedly timely—study designed to evaluate the impact of sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) taxes in Cook County, Illinois, and Oakland, California.

Using various data collection methods—individual-level surveys detailing consumption patterns; store audits; weekly, site-level Nielsen store scanner data; and employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics—Dr. Powell's team aims to examine the effectiveness of SSB taxes as a fiscal policy instrument aimed at reducing SSB consumption and improving population health. The wide-ranging study will also examine how SSB taxes affect areas such as employment and cross-border shopping.

Dr. Powell, an SPH faculty member since 2003, discusses the controversial nature of SSB taxes and her continued work on the project, including its early pivot in the aftermath of Cook County's repeal.

## Q What sparked your interest in SSB taxes in the first place?

I have been researching the impact of prices on behaviors of individuals for some time to test the idea that policy tools that change prices can induce individuals to change their behaviors and, subsequently, yield potential health benefits. As obesity has become a growing public health issue and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption is linked to obesity and other significant health outcomes, it was natural to wonder how pricing might impact the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.



Dr. Lisa Powell

One of the primary reasons sugar-sweetened beverages generate so much focus is that they contribute more than 40 percent of added sugar in the American diet and they provide no nutritional value. With the introduction of taxes in various jurisdictions, this becomes a quasi-experiment to look at pre- and post-tax data including in comparison sites to assess the impact of these taxes on consumption and, more importantly, on sugar intake.

## Q Why are these taxes such a hot-button topic?

On the one hand, you have public health trying to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks and well aware of sugar consumption's impact on health. Then, you have a powerful industry and their own business optimization model. And finally, you have individuals who aren't necessarily interested in being told what they should or should not be drinking, nor do they want to pay more for their sugary drinks.

The idea of the tax is to try to influence choice, especially if we have identified an externality—in this case, over consumption of sugary drinks. And frankly, it's not necessarily a revolutionary idea. We use cigarette and alcohol taxes to curb smoking and drinking. We use Social Security payroll deductions that essentially force people to save for the future. Taxes can help to correct behaviors and recognize that there are long-term implications to short-term decisions. Taxes can be used as a public policy tool to change behavior in a more optimal direction and reduce any negative externalities.

## Q What do you think most people misunderstand about these taxes?

From the beginning, the Cook County tax was not necessarily promoted with a lot of information around the potential public health benefits. The population may not be aware of the extent to which sugar-sweetened beverages impact their health, and the extent to which the added sugar contributes to adverse health outcomes.

## Q What do we know thus far about SSB taxes and how they impact consumption?

The research that we've undertaken as well as that by others in the field shows that individuals are generally price sensitive. When prices rise, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption declines. Where our analysis will go a step further, however, is in examining if that actually translates into a reduction in sugar intake, so we're accounting for substitution effects. So, yes, individuals consume less sugary drinks when the prices of those beverages rise, but does that lead to a net reduction in sugar intake or are they instead having an extra candy bar here or there? Understanding the net effect is critical because the ultimate goal is to reduce sugar intake and, thus, health issues related to excess sugar intake.

## Q What other elements will your team investigate with this study?

In addition to examining the impact of these taxes on consumption and sales, we'll also be evaluating the potential impact on unintended consequences like cross-border shopping, employment in taxing jurisdictions, the extent to which prices increase as a result of the tax and the marketing practices in stores and how those change over time.

One of the important things about the study is that we will have follow-up at six months as well as one and two years. Perhaps we will not see changes at the beginning, but they will instead emerge over time. Other changes might happen off the bat, but are they sustained over time or do they wane? The follow-up data will be critical to assessing the long-run impact of these taxes.

## Q What are you most curious about as you embark upon this study?

We expect to find changes in consumption and a reduction in sales. That's what the previous literature has shown. What we're most interested in, however, are substitution effects and how this translates into a net change in sugar intake. That will help us understand the extent to which these taxes have a public health impact in reducing sugar intake and, hence, diabetes and other illnesses. This has not yet been examined, so that's the very novel piece of our research here.

Then, we're also particularly interested in potential unintended consequences like cross-border shopping and job loss. This data will provide evidence for policymakers as to whether the claims by industry are really red herrings or if they are true and persist over time.

## Q How does the repeal of the Cook County tax alter your initial plans for this research?

Nothing changes with the Oakland piece of the grant and we're moving ahead as planned. With Cook County, though, we had collected all of the baseline data, such as individual-level surveys about consumption patterns and sugar intake from 2,500 Cook County adults and those from our comparison site of St. Louis, in advance of the repeal. It will be helpful to document our baseline data, which has not been previously available, and should serve as valuable background for public health practitioners who want to understand the extent of sugary drink consumption in Cook County.

From the sales data, we hope to examine two years before the activation of the Cook County tax, about four months in which the tax was live and then be able to follow the sales data after the tax ends on December 1, 2017. That would almost provide a natural experiment consisting of two interventions: first, when the tax was turned on; and second, when the tax was turned off four months later. That could inform us on the extent to which behavior changes as prices fluctuate up and down and I suspect we might see some intriguing data. It offers us the opportunity for a rigorous research study in which we have some exogenous shocks and changes in prices to examine the impact on behavior. ●





**DIVISION OF  
EPIDEMIOLOGY AND  
BIOSTATISTICS**



**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF WATER CONTAMINATION ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

Dr. Leslie Stayner is a Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and Director of a training program in Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology that is supported by funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. He has over 35 years

of research experience and is best known for his research on occupational hazards, and particularly carcinogens such as asbestos, formaldehyde and ethylene oxide.

Over the past few years, Dr. Stayner has developed an interest in studying the potential effects of water contamination by nitrate and other agrichemicals on adverse birth outcomes and childhood cancer. He and Drs. Mary Turyk, Kirsten Almberg and Rachael Jones at UIC SPH received funding for studying these issues in the Midwest from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. This research program was highly productive and produced suggestive evidence that water contamination by nitrate, atrazine and arsenic was associated with an increased risk of adverse birth effects (preterm and

low birth weight births). There were many limitations in this study related to the quality and completeness of the exposure, outcome and other potentially confounding risk factor data.

Most recently, Dr. Stayner and colleagues

at the Universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen and Statens Serum Institute in Denmark have received a grant to study "Nitrate in drinking water and the risk of adverse birth outcomes," and a grant from the Danish Karen Elise Jensen

Fund to study "Early life exposures to nitrates in drinking water and childhood cancer." These studies will capitalize on the availability of high quality health and nitrate exposure and other risk factor data that is available and linkable in Denmark to study the effect of nitrate drinking water on adverse birth outcomes and childhood cancer in a cohort of over one million births. He is also collaborating with researchers at the National Cancer Institute on extending this research to examine the effects of exposure to pesticides, and other agricultural hazards on childhood cancer risk. Nitrate is the most common contaminant in water systems in the US, Denmark and in the world. Thus, the findings from these studies have the potential to have a high impact on policies related to agriculture and water contamination worldwide. ●

**DIVISION OF  
COMMUNITY HEALTH  
SCIENCES**



**EXAMINING PATHWAYS FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD VIOLENCE EXPOSURE TO DATING VIOLENCE**

Dr. Brenikki Floyd is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Community Health Sciences with 14 years of experience conducting HIV prevention research with diverse populations using innovative strategies. Her areas of interest include reducing health disparities in HIV/STIs among at-risk youth and young adults with a particular focus on sexual and gender minorities (i.e. LGBTQ) and racial/ethnic minority adolescents and young adults. An additional area of interest includes the application of health communication strategies, including the adoption of new digital media technologies, message design, and health behavior theory to promote healthy decision-making and behavior.

**DIVISION OF  
HEALTH POLICY AND  
ADMINISTRATION**



**STUDYING THE IMPACTS OF INNOVATION IN INSURANCE BENEFIT DESIGN AND PHARMACEUTICALS**

Dr. Nicholas Tilipman is Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Administration. He is an economist, focusing on the intersection of health policy, health economics, and industrial organization. His research focuses on the effects of competition

and regulation on the behavior of employers, insurance providers, hospitals, and doctors. He also studies the effects of innovation in the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the effects of health insurance on labor market outcomes.

Dr. Tilipman's current work investigates employer and insurer incentives to offer narrow-network insurance plans to their employees and customers, as well as the pricing and welfare effects of switching to these types of products. This is a particularly important question, as firms increasingly turn to offering such benefit designs to defray rapidly rising health care costs. To tackle this question, Dr. Tilipman

uses detailed medical claims data from a large benefits administrator in Massachusetts, combined with rich data on physician affiliations with medical groups, hospitals, and health systems. Using these data as well as modeling and estimation techniques from the economics literature, he is able to answer questions such as: why do patients choose the physicians they do, and how do these choices change when physician affiliations change? How much



continued on next page...

Prior to joining the CHS faculty, Dr. Floyd was the Project Director of a study funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) called GIRLTALK: We Talk. Working with UIC's Dr. Geri Donenberg and Stanford University's Dr. Helen Wilson, the project was designed to expand upon a longitudinal study with low income, urban African American adolescent girls to examine developmental pathways from early childhood violence exposure to dating violence and sexual risk.

Dating violence and unsafe sex represent significant public health concerns that occur in the context of romantic relationships and disproportionately impact young, urban African American women. Thus, in this study, Dr. Floyd expanded the research focus by broadening relationship risk to include dating violence and measuring biological markers of physiological stress response and sexually transmitted infections. She and her colleagues examined links among early violence exposure, dating violence, and unsafe sexual behavior in addition to relationship characteristics, physiological markers of stress response and psychological mechanisms.

**Dating violence and unsafe sex represent significant public health concerns.**

Dr. Floyd successfully re-contacted and recruited 129 participants who completed previous longitudinal data collection, including a trauma assessment, and recruited and interviewed 40 percent of their romantic or sexual partners. Eighty percent of the young women reported physical or sexual violence within their romantic partnerships over the past year, and biological tests indicated that 30 percent of the women and 15 percent of their partners were infected with sexually transmitted infections. These findings show support for predicted linkages and highlight the role of violent victimization from partners in explaining the pathway from early violence exposure to sexual risk. Findings also highlight the role of gender-based power dynamics in increasing partner violence among these young women. These findings can be used to develop culturally tailored, gender sensitive interventions to foster healthy romantic relationships in young African American women with histories of violence exposure. ●



...continued from page 9

are different types of consumers willing to pay for broader physician networks? And how do different policy scenarios affect firm decisions on whether to broaden or narrow the physician networks of their insurance plans?

Another area of interest for Dr. Tilipman is the pharmaceutical market. In joint work with coauthors at Cornell University and the Universidad de Los Andes, he is currently investigating innovation in colorectal cancer treatments, a condition for which the average price

of treatment increased dramatically over the last two decades, largely due to the approval and widespread use of new drug regimens. Using data on sales and prices of colorectal cancer regimens as well as data on drug efficacy and side effects from randomized clinical trials, the authors are able to construct a series of price indices that take into account the value that physicians place on drug quality. Using these estimates, they are able to assess whether the rise in drug prices have been worth the cost when factoring in improvements in treatment quality. ●

**DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES**



David Jacobs is Adjunct Associate Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences. He also serves as Chief Scientist at the National Center for Healthy Housing in Washington, D.C. and directs the Collaborating Center for Healthy

Housing Research and Training in the U.S. for the World Health Organization/PAHO. His research examines the relationship between housing quality and health outcomes.

Dr. Jacobs is one of the nation's authorities on childhood lead poisoning prevention and recently served as a contributing author on the subject for a major report by Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. That report contains a new cost benefit analysis on policies that when implemented would generate at least \$80 billion in savings for children born in 2018 alone. The report has received much attention in the wake of the Flint and East Chicago experiences. The estimates are based on the most recent data and will be used in upcoming briefings for Congress.

Dr. Jacobs also serves as Principal Investigator for a national study regarding asthma and other health

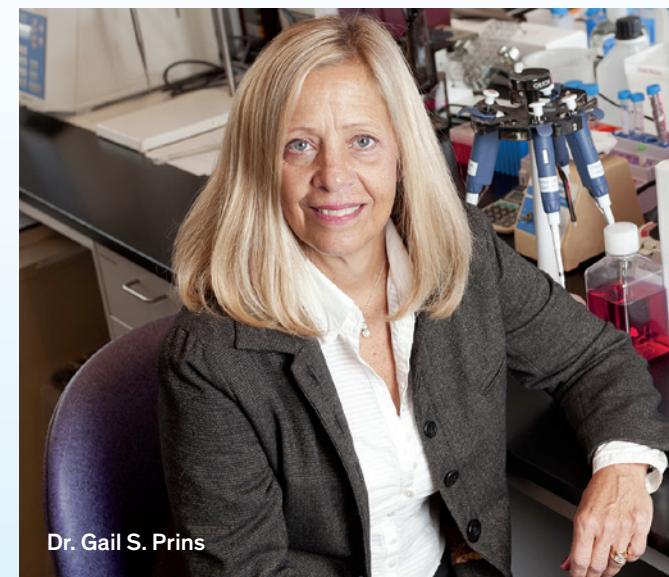
**EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING QUALITY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES**

outcomes when housing rehabilitation uses green principles. The study is underway in New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco. UIC students are helping to collect and analyze the data. His previous work at UIC has included a randomized controlled trial of ventilation standards used during weatherization, lead dustfall from housing demolition, and the effect of green housing standards on Medicaid expenditures, all of which enabled UIC students to complete their degrees. The demolition study has been used to develop best practices on demolition of older housing containing lead-based paint. He has worked with WHO to produce a forthcoming International Healthy Housing Guidelines and recently authored a paper with Dr. Linda Forst at UIC SPH on the need for heightened collaboration between Occupational Safety and Health and the Healthy Housing Fields. He is currently working with the Metropolitan Tenants Organization and others to enact a proactive healthy housing code inspection ordinance in Chicago.

Dr. Jacobs has served on a study from the National Academy of Sciences on integrating health into long-term disaster recovery. He previously served as the Director of HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, where he authored reports to Congress that launched the nation's healthy housing initiative in 2000. He is a frequent guest lecturer at UIC and holds degrees in Environmental Engineering, Technology and Science Policy, Environmental Health and Political Science and is a Certified Industrial Hygienist. ●

*The report has received much attention in the wake of the Flint and East Chicago experiences.*

# New Environmental Health Center to Study Effects of Pollution



Dr. Gail S. Prins

*"...the determinants of racial and ethnic health disparities remain poorly understood, which makes successful intervention much more challenging."*

The UIC School of Public Health will collaborate with the University of Chicago to create a new environmental health center to study the health effects of pollution. Together the two Universities will try to understand and reduce environmental health-related disparities among Chicago residents. A \$4 million grant over four years from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at the National Institutes of Health will fund the center.

The new center, called the ChicAgo Center for Health and Environment (CACHET), will focus its community efforts first on Chicago's South and West Sides, where environmental pollutants are most prevalent. CACHET co-director Gail S. Prins, Professor of Urology in the College of Medicine and adjunct Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences and Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the School of Public Health at UIC, will work with researchers to analyze the health effects of air pollution, water quality, exposure to industrial chemicals and other contaminants on adults and children. They'll also work to identify windows of susceptibility, study combined exposures and develop new ways to measure each individual's environmental exposures over time.

"The Chicago region faces disproportionate rates of diabetes, respiratory illnesses, heart disease and cancer as well as HIV/AIDS and homicide," Dr. Prins said. "Although studies have identified multiple contributors

to these inequities, the determinants of racial and ethnic health disparities remain poorly understood, which makes successful intervention much more challenging."

Of the more than 20 NIEHS-designated centers across the country, CACHET is the only center to be operated jointly and equally by two institutions. "As a NIEHS-designated center, we are better equipped to pursue shared research questions and identify emerging issues that advance understanding about how pollutants and other environmental factors affect human biology and may lead to disease," Dr. Prins said. ●





# Making a Difference in the Health of Populations Around the World

## 1 CHICAGO

Cara McShane and Nneka Ukegby are second year MPH students in Community Health Sciences with Global Health Concentrations. They completed their field experience at the UI Health Cancer Center's Office of Global Assets and Innovative Approaches for Cancer Equity. During this experience, they worked with a team of medical and public health professionals from Cuba to assist with program planning and implementation of a project to reduce infant mortality in the Englewood community, using best practices learned from the Cuban colleagues.



Jessica Chepp, left

## 5 BOLIVIA

Jessica Chepp is a second year MPH student in Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences with a Global Health Concentration. She worked with Engineers in Action and Engineers Without Borders to improve local water and health needs in the remote, indigenous community of Torewa, Bolivia. Together they worked on a water treatment system that is portable, easy to use and includes locally sourced materials.

## 2 INDIA

Mayuko Takamiya, a second year MPH student in Epidemiology, studied food insecurity and medication adherence among female sex workers with HIV in Hyderabad, India.



Mayuko Takamiya, right

## 4 GREECE

Erin Steele, a second year student in Community Health Sciences with a Global Health Concentration, worked with Lighthouse Relief to offer mental health and psychosocial support programs for children living in a refugee camp in Ritsona, Greece. Erin conducted needs assessments of refugee children in the camp and determined standard operating procedures for mental health referrals.

## 6 MALAWI

Alyson Klausung, a second year MPH student in Community Health Sciences with a Global Health Concentration, completed an internship at the Kamuzu College of Nursing, University of Malawi. She worked on an HIV prevention study called *A Community-Based Model for HIV Prevention and Testing in Malawi* where she evaluated a peer group intervention for adolescent women in secondary school.

## 3 ISRAEL

Dr. Linda Forst, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, and Ms. Alyson Lofthouse, Senior Associate Director of the Global Health Program, provided guest lectures in Ben-Gurion University's summer global health course. Sayuri Fujita, a second year MPH student in Health Policy and Administration, enrolled in the course and completed her summer field practicum with Physicians for Human Rights.



Sayuri Fujita



Alyson Klausung

## Meeting of the Minds in Morocco

Global health and environmental and occupational health programs forge new partnerships



In March 2016, the UIC School of Public Health Global Health Program hosted a delegation of ten doctors, researchers and health officials from across the Middle East and North Africa through the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Delegation members discussed how each entity trains students to apply health prevention and intervention models in global settings as well as possible collaborations to address complex global health challenges.

Mohammed VI University leadership team, UIC team, and community stakeholders meet at a workshop focused on environmental health in Morocco.

Following the visit, the Global Health Program continued conversations regarding potential areas of collaboration with the International School of Public Health (Ecole Internationale de Santé Publique) at Mohammed VI University of Health Sciences (L'Université Mohammed VI des Sciences de la Santé) in Casablanca, Morocco. "The two institutions determined the partnership would focus on environmental and occupational health, as the International School of Public Health does not have curriculum in this area," explained Alyson Lofthouse, Senior Associate Director of the Global Health Program. "Further, the environmental challenges in Morocco, such as air quality and waste management, are substantial."

In October 2017, Ms. Lofthouse traveled with Drs. Sam Dorevitch, Interim Director and Associate Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences (EOHS), and David Hinkamp, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor of EOHS, to Casablanca. "The purpose of the visit was to discuss the scope of the collaboration in further detail, including capacity building in environmental and occupational health and student and faculty exchanges."



Drs. Hinkamp and Dorevitch teaching a course on environmental and occupational health to master of public health students.

Ms. Lofthouse said. Drs. Dorevitch and Hinkamp also provided an executive course on environmental and occupational health to master of public health students.

In addition to the course, the UIC SPH team met with the Mohammed VI University of Health Sciences leadership team and integral partners at the Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations. Together they participated in a workshop designed to build a platform and an agenda for environmental and occupational health programming for Morocco. "The School of Public Health looks forward to continued partnership with the Ecole Internationale de Santé Publique in Casablanca, a Sister City of Chicago," Ms. Lofthouse said.



## Global Health Course Brings Students to Cuba

The UIC School of Public Health offered a new elective course this past summer that provided graduate students a first-hand look at how Cuba delivers health care and public health programs. Public Health in Cuba, created in partnership with the Cuban National School of Public Health (ENSAP) in Havana, included in-class instruction at UIC as well as two weeks of coursework and field visits to health facilities and programs in Cuba. Seven students took the class, which was led by faculty members Drs. Judith Levy and Nadine Peacock.

and health-oriented organizations. “One nice feature of the course,” noted Dr. Levy, “is that the students were lodged at various *casas particulares*, which are family-run homestays that allowed them to live and experience life in Cuba as members of the local Cuban community.”

Each student selected a special topic to delve into while in Cuba and, upon returning to UIC, presented their findings in a special session for faculty, staff, students, family, and friends. “While in Cuba, we learned that their focus on a continuous and dynamic risk assessment of patients’ health status is one of the keys to their ability to appropriately allocate resources,” said Elizabeth DiNovis, a second year MPH student. “This constant evaluation of health status at individual and population levels is essential in informing the country’s health policies and priorities.”

Frances Lendacki, a second year MPH student who plans to pursue a PhD in public health, added, “Such boots-on-the-ground evaluations of public health intervention and risk-reduction strategies epitomize the spirit of community-based, participatory health that is emphasized throughout our UIC experience.”

The course is the first at UIC to bring students to Cuba, and UIC is only one of a handful of schools to do so across the nation. In 2015, the UIC School of Public Health and the National School of Public Health in Havana signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a partnership between

the two schools to provide research and collaborative learning opportunities. The summer course as well as faculty academic exchanges are important outcomes of this partnership.

“We hope to offer this course next summer and to enroll students across the campus,” said Dr. Peacock. UIC SPH also intends to again bring Cuban public health researchers from the National School of Public Health to further share their expertise in providing public health services. “I know we are all grateful to have had the chance to witness the Cuban system firsthand and hope future students can keep the momentum going,” said Ms. Lendacki. “Visiting Cuba was a unique learning experience and I hope additional UIC students will be able to enjoy the same opportunity to observe these public health strategies in action,” Ms. DiNovis said. ●

**“THERE’S A LOT WE CAN LEARN FROM CUBA TO HELP US IMPROVE THE WAY WE PROVIDE CARE AND PROMOTE HEALTH IN THIS COUNTRY.”**



Dr. Judith Levy (second from left) and students spent two weeks in Cuba.

The course was designed for students to learn how Cuba, despite severely limited resources, has evolved a system of free health care for its entire population at a level of quality on par with most high-income countries, including the United States. Areas of success include achievement of low maternal and infant mortality, control of infectious diseases including HIV, a low physician to patient ratio, excellence in preventive medicine, and the delivery of efficacious community-based public health programs. Alyson Lofthouse, senior associate director of the global health program in the UIC School of Public Health, observes, “There’s a lot we can learn from Cuba to help us improve the way we provide care and promote health in this country. Similarly, we maintain knowledge that we can share with our Cuban colleagues.”

Before traveling to Cuba, students spent two weeks at UIC preparing for their visit by learning about Cuba’s healthcare system through readings and instruction from faculty and guest lecturers. In Cuba, students learned about the healthcare system through lectures at ENSAP, and saw the system in action by visiting local clinics, hospitals



LAKE VICTORIA AT SUNSET IN KISUMU.

SOMETIMES THE ONLY SOURCE OF WATER YOU HAVE IS A PUDDLE.



**KENDALL W. ANDERSON, PHD STUDENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES, SPENT TWO WEEKS IN KENYA** where he piloted a new device to disinfect drinking water in rural communities. As a recipient of the Douglas Passaro Global Horizons scholarship, Kendall was able to travel to Kisumu, Kenya, a region that has previously dealt with a cholera epidemic resulting from infected drinking water. The devices he piloted use solar power and ozone to disinfect the drinking water in the homes of the users. This allowed users to not have to rely on powered infrastructure and are of little to no cost per use. These devices could increase a family’s access to clean drinking water and prevent the development of diarrheal disease and other pathogens.

With the assistance of the Safe Water and Aids Project (SWAP), Kendall was able to successfully conduct his research and pave the way for larger studies in the community in the future. Traditionally, boiling water is the go-to method for disinfecting drinking water, however, the availability of wood and other costs has made boiling less realistic. “In interviews and site visits, community members were very excited by the devices because they appeared to boil the water without heat,” Kendall explained. ●

THIS FACTORY HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF DUMPING CHEMICALS INTO THE COMMUNITY’S PRIMARY SOURCE OF WATER - THE KISIAN RIVER.



WAP EMPLOYEE, JARED, COLLECTING WATER TO BE ANALYZED IN THE LAB.



CANS ARE USED TO COLLECT WATER AND SOMETIMES YOU CAN FIND VENDERS COLLECTING WATER IN THE MORNINGS.



# Generous Donors Endow First Lectureship on Public Health Ethics

Named in honor of Professor Daniel Swartzman, the inaugural lecture drew nearly 150 attendees

On October 4, 2017, the UIC School of Public Health held its inaugural Daniel Swartzman Public Health Ethics Lecture. Named in honor of Mr. Swartzman, emeritus professor of health policy and administration, the lecture is the school's first fully endowed lectureship. With more than 150 guests in attendance, Dr. Lisa M. Lee, founding chair of the American Public Health Association's Ethics Section, delivered the keynote.

"Teaching ethics at a school of public health isn't like other jobs, where you can get immediate feedback on how well you are doing. It may take years for your students to be able to benefit from what they have learned, and by then they are long gone," explained Mr. Swartzman. "So, after spending 36 years at UIC, I have wondered at times how much my work had accomplished. To have my former students endow this lectureship and to have someone with the prominence of Dr. Lee give the inaugural lecture is tangible evidence that I must have been doing something right. Every teacher should be so lucky!"



Mr. Swartzman was a founding faculty member and served as the school's first Associate Dean for Student Affairs. He taught courses in ethics, law, public policy, advocacy, management

and strategic planning, thus having an impact on the educational experience of thousands of students. As a gifted teacher, he was well liked by his students, who affectionately call themselves "Dan Fans."

"Our original goal was to raise \$25,000 to establish an ethics lecture. However, we were pleasantly surprised by the generous response of our donors and surpassed this goal to reach \$100,000, which is the level required by the University to endow a full lectureship," explained Tamara Josserand, Assistant Dean for Advancement. "So many of Dan's former students, including one significant anonymous donor, helped us reach this endowment level."



Dean Wayne H. Giles, Dr. Lisa M. Lee, and Daniel Swartzman

Mr. Swartzman and colleagues like Dr. Lee who study ethics want the field of public health to ask questions like "why we in public health do what we do?" and "what are the moral arguments in favor of strong public health programs and policies?" and "how good are we, as a country, at making the tough moral choices that are presented by public health problems?" He argues that most public health professionals are responding to a calling, to the "urge to care for the other." That idealism, which motivates our decisions to base our careers on being of help to others, and to base our policy prescriptions on moral precepts, is undermined by political systems that systematically avoid the responsibility to make moral choices. This is a critically important, but less understood and mostly under-studied, part of public health ethics. For this reason, the endowed lectureship will ensure that the area of public health ethics will forever be a part of the discourse at the UIC School of Public Health as we educate tomorrow's best and brightest leaders. ●



Guests enjoyed connecting with friends during a cocktail hour.

left to right — Michael Newberger, Charlotte Newberger, and Linda Glick



Longtime Cure Violence staff member, Jalon Arthur, captivates the crowd in addressing the contagious nature of violence.

*Let's make the cure contagious*

October 19th marked a first for Cure Violence. The highly acclaimed violence prevention program of UIC School of Public Health held its inaugural gala event at The Arts Club of Chicago. Appropriately titled "Let's Make the Cure Contagious," the gala was a huge success, raising over \$200,000 to benefit Cure Violence's health-based work on a national and international level, as well as its local efforts through the inspiring and impactful CeaseFire Illinois program.

Attended by 160 guests including prominent Chicagoans and longtime Cure Violence supporters, the gala was an evening of dining, celebration and an illuminating program. The gala was capped off with fanfare in honoring the great Ramsey Lewis, jazz icon and Chicago native, with a Cure Violence award and hearing Mr. Lewis speak about his life, music, Chicago, and the value of exceptional programs like Cure Violence in our world.

Heartfelt thanks to the many supporters --- Co-chairs Diane Weinberg, Jeremy Kaufman and Soma Roy, gala committee members Caryn Rosen Adelman and Jon Levine, speakers Gary Slutkin and Jalon Arthur, and the UIC SPH Advancement staff --- for making the 2017 gala an extraordinary event.

Gala Co-chairs pose with awardee Ramsey Lewis and his wife, Jan Lewis.

left to right — Diane Weinberg, Jan Lewis, Ramsey Lewis, Jeremy Kaufman, and Soma Roy





# Doctor of Public Health in Leadership Program Hosts First Annual Symposium

The public health field has long complained about the divide between academic public health and public health practice. From the practitioners' perspectives, one underlying cause for this condition is that academic research is not directly relevant to day-to-day practice problems. A principal aim of the UIC School of Public Health's DrPH in Leadership Program is to close this gap.

On August 23, 2017 the UIC Doctor of Public Health in Leadership (UIC DrPH) program held its first annual Practice-Based Research Symposium, *The Public Health Research Landscape: Exploring Practice-Based Research Paradigms*. UIC DrPH is a distance-learning program for mid-career public health professionals, educating them in the leadership and research skills needed by adaptive leaders in our challenging public health environment. Although public health professionals, influenced by medical research paradigms, often discuss aspirations to "evidence-based practice," UIC DrPH faculty see limitations in this approach to integrating research and practice. As Dr. Patrick Lenihan, DrPH Program Director, stated in opening the symposium: "The separation of research from practice in the production of knowledge is at the heart of the problem of making systemic health change. A new approach is needed that recognizes that for research results to be relevant to practice, research questions should come from practice and ideally research should take place within practice settings with practitioners joining if not becoming researchers in the research enterprise."

The symposium, which was co-sponsored by the Coordinating Center for Public Health Practice, the Center for Healthy Work, the Illinois Education and Research Center, and the MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice, facilitated a conversation among faculty, researchers, students, and practitioners, from public health and allied fields. The audience, which included DrPH students attending as part of the program's annual Summer Institute, heard presentations

of current and emerging approaches to practice-based/informed research. Dr. Jennifer Hebert-Beirne, an Assistant Professor of Community Health Sciences at UIC SPH, discussed her community-based participatory research (CBPR) efforts in Chicago communities focusing on community health equity and social determinants of health. She described the means she uses in her approach to CBPR to ensure shared learning among university-based researchers and community members who join the research team. Dr. Hebert-Beirne emphasized that "health inequities are socially produced." Therefore, university-based researchers need to understand their own social position with respect to the research question and partner community. Research that privileges community members' knowledge, expertise, and research questions, and addresses the imbalance of power and privilege of traditional research, will ultimately create more meaningful collaboration and transform productive research into social change.

Dr. David Stovall, UIC Professor of Educational Policy Studies and African-American Studies, presented his Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) study which addressed systemic inequality by attempting to bring theory

to action. He has spent the last ten years working with community organizations and schools to develop curricula that address issues of social justice. Dr. Stovall emphasized that researchers "must be clear about how theory impacts and informs our work" but at the same time have to "shift the dial to ask questions of ourselves as people who are



2017 DrPH Program Cohort

research

working with those who experience injustice." Similar to Dr. Hebert-Beirne's use of community researchers, Dr. Stovall's YPAR model supports youth as researchers to "study up," i.e. study the systems of power that impact them, including the intersectionality of school closings, public housing, and law enforcement policies.

Dr. Christina Welter, Clinical Assistant Professor in Community Health Sciences at UIC SPH, Associate Director of the DrPH Program, and Director of the MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice, presented her and her DrPH colleagues' emerging model for Pragmatic Systems Action Research (as internal leader, then external researcher) in leading policy, systems, and environmental change, supporting upstream interventions to decrease obesity in Cook County. Combining approaches to knowledge creation from social constructivism, critical realism, pragmatism, and systems thinking, Dr. Welter emphasized the need in public health systems research to make assumptions explicit; see perspectives and connections within and across socio-

"...ideally research should take place within practice settings with practitioners joining if not becoming researchers..."

ecological levels, including grassroots and "grasstops" organizational levels; explore and address social norms; and require collective learning-in-action, in order to build the capacity to support systemic change. Dr. Welter concluded her presentation by noting that, "the DrPH in Leadership program is about building leadership and scholarship in

practice to unpack and understand the complexity for the purposes of developing the evidence about and for sustainable ways to create social change."

Dr. Kieran McCartan is an Associate Professor in Criminology at the University of West England, and co-author, with Colin Robson, of the fourth edition of a seminal textbook, *Real World Research* (Wiley 2015), now used in DrPH courses. Dr. McCartan was the invited symposium discussant, where he brought his extensive experience as a teacher, researcher, and public media commentator to synthesize



key symposium themes: researcher credibility, accountability, and leadership are vital for practice-based research to have impact. "Research is personal. You need to buy into and be invested in your research. The core of real world research is to reflect upon your role and conduct research that impacts upon you and your colleagues' work. Reflecting on your role in the process is key. . . You're responsible for translating experiences in a realistic way. Think about the questions, methodology, and tools you are using." ●

To learn more about the UIC DrPH program and plans for next year's symposium, contact [drph@uic.edu](mailto:drph@uic.edu).



# Celebrating the Achievements of Students, Alumni, Faculty and Staff

Students **MARIAM AEJAZ**, **VIDYA VISVABHARATHY**, and **ELIZABETH KAMINSKY** are recipients of the Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellowship, a year-long service learning program that empowers aspiring health professionals to design and direct innovative community service projects.



Dr. Hussain Ali

**DR. HUSSAIN ALI**, MD, (MPH '04) recently joined the Obstetrics & Gynecology Department at Mayo Clinic Health

System. He is a fellow of the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology, a diplomat of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a member of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

**DR. DAVID ANSELL**, MD, (MPH '91) published a new book, *The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills*.

**DR. SUZANNE CARLBERG-RACICH** (PhD '09) is a recipient of the 2017 Health & Medicine Policy Research Group Award, representing Chicago-area leaders whose work promotes social justice and challenges inequities in health and health care.

**DR. JAMIE F. CHRIQUI**, PhD, MHS, Professor of Health Policy and Administration, has been appointed to be a member of the Community Preventive Services Task Force of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**DANIELLE CHUN** (MPH '14) presented her research poster titled *Childhood Cancers and Water Contamination by Arsenic in Midwestern United States: An Ecological Study* at the Epidemiology Congress of the Americas.

**RENEE DUBOIS** (MPH '15) is the new Senior Practice Transformation Advisor at the American Medical Association.



Renee DuBois

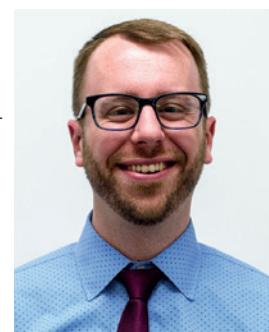
**DR. ONYINYECHE ENYIA** (PhD '15) has been appointed as Senior Manager HCM Health Informatics Analysis at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.



Dr. Onyinyechi Enyia

**DR. LINDA FORST**, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, assumed the role of the Director of Graduate Studies at the UIC School of Public Health.

**JAKE GOLICH** (MHA '08) is the new CEO of Mountain Vista Medical Center.



Jeffrey Grizzell

**JEFFREY GRIZZELL** (MHA '17) is the new Performance Improvement Advisor at Allina Health.

**MEMOONA HASNAIN**, MD, MHPE, (PhD '01), is a scholar with the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation.

**DR. SUSAN L. HUGHES**, Director of the Center for Research on Health and Aging and Professor of Community Health Sciences, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Aging and Public Health Section of APHA at the national meeting in November.



Dr. Susan Hughes

**DR. ROHAN JEREMIAH**, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Community Health Sciences, received the Rohingya Cultural Center Appreciation Award for being a public health advocate for the Rohingya Refugee community.

**DR. DAVID JIMENEZ** assumed the position of Director of Community Outreach Intervention Projects at the UIC School of Public Health.

**ALI FISH KAMEN** (MPH '96) is a Wellness Program Manager for StayWell, a health engagement company that helps clients engage and educate employees to improve health and business results.

**DR. STEVEN E. LACEY**, (PhD '02), CIH, CSP was inducted as the new President of the American Industrial Hygiene Association.

**SOPHIE NAJI**, Program Manager with the MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice, was awarded the Illinois Public Health Association Member Award of Merit.

**ALEX PAUL**, MHA candidate, co-authored an article titled "Unsustainable Physician Reimbursement Rates," which was published in the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons.

**DR. JOSEPH RUSKIEWICZ**, OD, (MPH '74), an Associate Professor at Salus University's School of Optometry, addressed the 17th International Congress of Ophthalmology and Optometry China. He discussed controlling myopia (near sightedness), a public health concern that now affects 90% of high school graduates.



Dr. Rohan Jeremiah

**JAMEL RUSSEL** (MPH '15) is a recipient of a 2017 Diverse Voices in Docs Fellowship from Kartemquin Films. Her film, *No More Girls*, is the story of one young woman's search for healing as she travels back to Liberia, West Africa to meet her sister, who was born out of rape. Ms. Russell is a filmmaker committed to ending systematic health inequalities around the world.



Jamel Russel

Doctoral student in epidemiology and biostatistics, **YU-HSUAN SHIH**, received a travel award to attend the Southeast Asia Regional Conference on Groundwater Arsenic in Hanoi, Vietnam, this November to present a poster on maternal-child health effects of arsenic exposure.



Claudia Telles

**CLAUDIA TELLES** (MPH '14), is the new Associate Director for Client Operations at Evolent Health.

**DAN WEISS** (MPH '15) is the new Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative Project Coordinator at NorthShore University HealthSystem.

**DR. CHRISTINA WELTER**, Associate Director of DrPH in Leadership, Director of the MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice, and Clinical Assistant Professor of Community Health Sciences, has been elected to the Executive Council of the Illinois Public Health Association.



Dr. Christina Welter

**DR. MATTHEW WESTERCAMP** (PhD '13, MS '08) co-authored a paper titled *Changes in male circumcision prevalence and risk compensation in the Kisumu, Kenya population* in the journal Science Now.

**DR. DANIEL WOZNICZKA**, MPH/MBA candidate in Health Policy and Administration, did a TEDx Talk on the future generation of doctors and ways they will change healthcare.

**DR. JING ZHANG**, Senior Research Specialist in Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, presented at the extreme events conference hosted by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The title of her presentation was "Acculturation and Elder Health in Asian Communities."

Tell us what you're up to! Email your news to [TelISPH@uic.edu](mailto:TelISPH@uic.edu).



# Alumna Participates in Obama Foundation's Training Day

**"I didn't realize how two strangers can find a common ground just by sitting at an eye-to-eye level and having an honest conversation," said Karen Aguirre (MPH '17).**

Karen Aguirre (MPH '17), who has a background in community engagement, served on the inaugural cohort of peer advisors for the Obama Foundation's first Training Day, an event held in Chicago on October 14, 2017 that brought together young adults to learn how to use their own story as a powerful tool for change. "My role was to recruit participants for the training day and screen the youth who got selected," Ms. Aguirre said. She

helped create the curriculum used during the training day, which encouraged participants to gain the skills necessary to organize residents for a cause, allowing them to then take their message to a larger audience.

According to the Obama Foundation website, peer advisors, like Ms. Aguirre, are young Chicagoans who are already participating in community and civic engagement work. She lead a series of inspirational



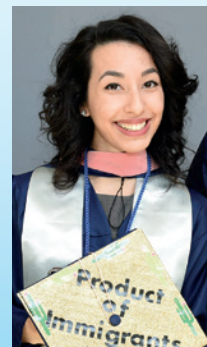
Karen Aguirre with President Barack Obama.

workshops and team challenges, including selecting an issue from their own community and working together to design a solution for it. The training day was focused on bringing Chicago youth together to talk about some of the most

**"This young boy shared with me about an unforeseen situation at home that kept him from doing what he loved most at school and I shared with him a story of how immigration impacted my family and the life of some of my closest friends," Karen Aguirre (left) said. Both stories were pretty deep, but what I loved most was the positive note we each ended them with.**

pressing issues in their communities. "For me, this was probably the heaviest part of the training day. The activity was based on story telling as a way to connect with another stranger. After we shared a story related to battling adversity in our neighborhoods in the South side, we had to re-tell the other person's story in the first person," explained Ms. Aguirre.

As the day neared its end, President Obama made a surprise appearance to listen to attendees share their ideas about tackling challenges in their communities, from addressing food deserts to increasing financial literacy in schools.



Ms. Aguirre, who grew up in Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago, said "The idea of being an advocate for a neighborhood sounds scary, but the work can start at any age. For me, this is a very proud moment. I've been taught how to talk about social issues so it's a great pleasure to give my knowledge and share what I've learned along the way." ●

Karen Aguirre displays her pride at the UIC SPH 2017 Commencement ceremony on May 5, 2017.

Photo Credit: Obama Foundation



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

- Invitation to annual Founders Circle reception
- Special communications from the Dean's Office
- Exclusive invitations to public health lectures
- Founders Circle recognition items



Create a better tomorrow for public health students, educators and the communities they serve by including the UIC School of Public Health in your estate plan today.

You can direct your gift to any fund or program at the school, making a UIC SPH education more affordable for students in need, or supporting research that improves people's health and changes lives.

Your gift helps us prepare the next generation of leaders, thinkers and doers and inspire answers to tomorrow's biggest challenges.

To learn more about the Founders Circle or Legacy Society, contact the Office of Advancement at [SPHAdvancement@uic.edu](mailto:SPHAdvancement@uic.edu).



## Welcome Dean Wayne H. Giles

Alumni, faculty, donors, staff and friends attended a welcome reception for Dean Wayne H. Giles on September 26, 2017. More than 130 attendees enjoyed an afternoon in UIC's Dorothy Bradley Atkins Medicinal Plant Garden, hosted by Dr. Robert Barish, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs.



UIC Chancellor Michael D. Amiridis, Dean Giles, Executive Director of the Illinois Medical District, Suzet McKinney (DrPH '09) and Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs Robert Barish.



Stephen Thompson (PhD '00) and Cynthia Klein-Banai (PhD '10) welcome Dean Giles.



Recent Graduate Board Members Sunny Seto (MPH '16) and Rebecca Allen (MPH '13) join Dr. Barish.



### AIHce

Alumni in Seattle for the American Industrial Hygiene Conference & Exposition attend a special reception on June 5, 2017.

# events



Alumni attend a special reception for Founders Circle and Legacy Society members before the Daniel Swartzman Public Health Ethics Lecture on October 4, 2017.

## 2018 Events

Please consider joining us for the following events:

**MARCH 1, 2018**  
**6:00 PM**

**Alumni Learning Series**  
UIC School of Public Health  
1603 W. Taylor Street  
Chicago, IL 60612

**NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK**  
**APRIL 2 – 8, 2018**

**APRIL 4, 2018**  
**5:30 PM**

**Women in Public Health Panel**  
UIC School of Public Health  
1603 W. Taylor Street  
Chicago, IL 60612

**APRIL 5, 2018**  
**6:00 PM**

**Annual Alumni Celebration**  
Save the date!

**APRIL 6, 2018**  
**Research and Practice Forum & Awards Day**

**12:00 PM – Poster Viewing**  
**2:30 Awards Ceremony**  
UIC School of Public Health  
1603 W. Taylor Street  
Chicago, IL 60612

**MAY 12, 2018**

**Commencement Ceremony**  
UIC Forum  
725 W. Roosevelt Road  
Chicago, IL 60607

**MAY 17, 2018**  
**5:30 PM**

**Healthy Spirits**  
Plymouth Rooftop Bar  
325 S. Plymouth Court  
Chicago, IL 60604



For more information on all of these events, visit [publichealth.uic.edu/alumni](http://publichealth.uic.edu/alumni).





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