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John Stone, clinical associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Science, directs the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange, a national enterprise that puts the School of Public Health and Health Professions at the center of the world.

Photo: Nancy J. Parisi

# Worldwide rehab

Rehabilitation researchers, practitioners and students from around the world consult a rich UB information resource every day.

An enthusiastic young American physical therapist meets an elderly Chinese-immigrant stroke victim for the first time. He smiles encouragingly and looks directly into his patient's eyes to be sure she knows she has his full interest and attention. She seems uneasy.

Someone born and raised in China has different cultural wiring from someone born and raised in the United States. According to the monograph Chinese Culture and Disability: Information for U.S. Service

Providers, "Americans view eye contact as an indication of mutual understanding and trust. For the Chinese, looking a superior or an elderly person directly in the eye indicates disobedience and threat."

The monograph is one of 12 on different cultures of immigrants to the U.S. written for the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE) and posted on the center's Web site for anyone to use.

Located since 1999 in the School of Public Health and Health Professions, CIRRIE is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. The school recently competed for and received \$2.5 million for a second five-year cycle of center activity.

John Stone, Ph.D., who directs CIRRIE, admits that cultural competence education is "something close to my heart," but it

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## We are the world, and better for it

I am a man of two souls—one Italian, from the country of my birth; one American, from the country that adopted me and where I lead a school that thrives on ties with the wider world. So I consider myself qualified to say that international connections are critical to our mission.

If we know one culture only, then everything we see around us may appear to be normal. From a public health perspective, that can be dangerous. Some years ago, when Americans were looking only at themselves, a serum cholesterol level of 250 mg/dL was considered normal. By broadening our view to include other populations, we discovered that our “normal” was too high and responsible for the high rate of heart disease in this country.

My own research often is international in scope. It has ranged from participation in the Intersalt project, which looked at the relationship between sodium excretion and blood pressure in 32 countries, to comparative studies of diet in Italy and the U.S.

Our Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange, the subject of the story on Page 1 of this issue of *Impact*, is an obvious example of the value of gathering expert knowledge from around the world.

We attract students from many countries to our programs—including the two from India’s Tibetan community whom you will read about on Page 4. Our faculty is truly global, coming from North and South America, Europe, Asia, the subcontinent of India; and we have formal exchange programs as far-flung as Brazil and India.

We are proud to be one of the schools that make the University at Buffalo the global institution that it is.

So let me wish my best to readers from every country and culture as a new year approaches.

Sincerely,



Maurizio Trevisan, M.D., M.S.



## Grants and gifts, new faculty and familiar faces

### Perry grant supports WNY Wellness Works

The Department of Social and Preventive Medicine will use a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to benefit the eight counties of Western New York. The foundation gave \$19,367 from the J. Warren Perry and Charles Donald Perry Fund to help establish the Western New York Wellness Works Regional Resource Center to assess, direct and research work-site health initiatives.

### Gifts enhance scholarship and research

An anonymous \$50,000 gift was recently made to the Richard N. Schmidt Biostatistics Scholarship Fund, which was established by friends of Dr. Schmidt in order to commemorate his 90th birthday this past July. Dr. Schmidt has been involved with the statistics and biostatistics programs at UB for over 65 years. The fund will help promising biostatistics graduate students fulfill their academic potential. This year’s scholarship winner is Xueya Cai in the Department of Biostatistics.

An anonymous occupational therapy alumna recently announced her intentions to leave \$75,000 in her will to establish an endowment providing funds for lectures and student research within the Department of Rehabilitation Science to expand the incorporation of animals in occupational therapy. This planned gift intention is another example of the ways alumni improve the education, research and community service at SPHHP.

### Giovino joins Department of Health Behavior

The new Department of Health Behavior welcomes Gary A. Giovino, Ph.D., associate professor in UB’s Roswell Park Division at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and former director of the institute’s Tobacco Control Research Program in the Department of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences. Giovino began his appointment as full professor in September and will remain a research professor in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.



Giovino

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### J. Warren Perry Lecture Rescheduled

Ronald C. Kessler, professor of health care policy at Harvard Medical School, is principal investigator of the National Comorbidity Survey, the first nationally representative survey of psychiatric disorders in the United States. He also directs the World Health Organization’s World Mental Health Surveys, a series of epidemiological surveys in 28 countries. His lecture on October 13 was postponed due to weather.



Kessler

**NEW DATE & TIME: Friday, February 9, at 3:30 p.m., Lippes Concert Hall, Slee Hall, UB North Campus.**

# Healthy behavior

Adding the Department of Health Behavior is a major step toward full accreditation for the School of Public Health and Health Professions.

The way people deal with diet, with the hazards of driving, with alcohol or tobacco, with exposure to the sun, with sex, even with flossing their teeth, can cause chronic disease or prevent or reduce chronic disease. These, and many other things we do (and don't do) in our daily lives that influence health, are health behaviors.

In addition to individual motivation, health behavior is influenced by such external factors as socioeconomic environment, media and public policy, and by stress.

This is the realm of inquiry for the School of Public Health and Health Professions' new Department of Health Behavior. Its faculty pursue basic questions about how to promote and maintain health and prevent and treat illness by influencing human behavior.

Lynn T. Kozlowski, formerly professor and head of biobehavioral health in the College of Health and Human Development at Pennsylvania State University, assumed the post of chair in the department on September 1, 2006.

"An international leader in smoking research, he grew his former department at Penn State into one of the best in the country," Dean Maurizio Trevisan says about Kozlowski.

"He will be a major asset to the university and the school, and we're very excited to have him join our faculty.

"I look forward to working with Lynn as he develops the Department of Health Behavior here at UB, which will play a major role in our becoming a fully accredited school of public health."

Kozlowski's primary interest is smoking and health. He has published more than 100 papers in the field, and research in that area will be a major component of the new UB department.

"Given the experts already at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo will be one of the strongest places in North America for tobacco research and the study of public policy issues on tobacco use," according to Kozlowski.

The UB Department of Health Behavior will offer curricula leading to M.P.H., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. "In five years, we plan to be one of the top graduate programs in health behavior in the U.S.," Kozlowski says.

A graduate of Wesleyan University, Kozlowski holds two master's degrees and a doctorate, the latter conferred from Columbia University. While at Columbia, he held a two-year National Science Foundation

Traineeship and a two-year New York State Herbert Lehman Fellowship.

He also spent a year at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine on a National Institute of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse postdoctoral traineeship.

Prior to his tenure at Penn State, Kozlowski taught at the University of Toronto for 10 years and was on staff at the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto, Canada, for 11 years. He was head of the foundation's Biobehavioral Research on Tobacco Use unit when he joined Penn State's biobehavioral health faculty in 1990. He was named head of the department in 1993.

Kozlowski has served on the editorial board of several scientific journals and is a fellow of the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research. In 2006 he was recognized by the Pan American Health Organization/



Lynn T. Kozlowski, a nationally recognized expert in smoking and health, is chair of the new Department of Health Behavior.

Photo: Douglas Levere

World Health Organization as one of six recipients of the World No Tobacco Day Award.

Kozlowski currently is recruiting faculty in the areas of physical activity/nutrition and health communication. Gary A. Giovino, Ph.D., former director of the Tobacco Control Research Program at Roswell Park, and an associate professor in UB's Roswell Park Division, already has joined the new department as a full professor. (See News, opposite page.)

—Lois Baker

# Long way to Buffalo

The School of Public Health and Health Professions attracts international students from all continents, including two from the Tibetan community in India.



Lhakpa Dolma (left) and Tsering Dhondup outside UB's Farber Hall, where they are earning M.P.H. degrees through the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.

Photo: Nancy J. Parisi

Dharamsala, a town high in the mountains of northern India, is the home of the 14th Dalai Lama in exile and 100,000 of his Tibetan followers who fled China-occupied Tibet in 1959.

Dharamsala also links the personal histories of Lhakpa Dolma and Tsering Dhondup, two Tibetans earning master of public health (M.P.H.) degrees through SPHHP's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.

Dolma was born in Bylakuppe, the largest Tibetan settlement in India, and later worked as a secretary in the emergency medicine office of the Department of Health of the

Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala. Dhondup did the opposite: he was born and raised in Dharamsala, and then joined a hospital in Bylakuppe as a medical officer after graduating from medical school in New Delhi.

### Seeing the forest

Because of their work in India's health care system, they each decided to earn advanced degrees in public health.

Dhondup, a first-year M.P.H. student, is specializing in epidemiology. "In India we're seeing huge problems with infectious diseases, like tuberculosis, persisting, as well as newer, chronic

diseases like AIDS and lung cancer," he says. Community health workers are overwhelmed by caseloads of preventable illnesses and disorders, like gastrointestinal diseases and substance abuse, the latter a symptom of high unemployment rates.

A clinician by training, Dhondup's focus has shifted from primary care to preventive medicine. "I was only treating the individual patient, but then I realized that the entire population was suffering," he says.

Dolma, who trained as an accountant, became interested in public health administration

while working at the Tibetan health department.

### An international draw

Tibetans interested in studying in the U.S. apply through the Tibet Fund in New York City and are supported by the Fulbright Scholarship Award administered by the fund's Tibetan Scholarship Program. Students don't choose their school, although they can give preferences based on their academic interests.

UB ranks 10th nationally in international student enrollment. "We attract many Fulbright applications," says Stephen Dunnett, vice provost for international education.

**"I was only treating the individual patient, but then I realized that the entire population was suffering."**

—Tsering Dhondup

Tibetans have "greatly enriched this campus" through their involvement with social and cultural activities, Dunnett says. "Tibet has a long and noble history in medicine, too."

According to UB's Office of International Education, there are six Tibetans enrolled this year, and Dunnett expects a spike in Tibetan and Asian enrollment following the Dalai Lama's recent visit.

Dhondup is the new president of the UB Graduate Student Association's Tibetan Club. Dolma is treasurer, and is in her second and final year of the M.P.H. program.

Dhondup and Dolma especially enjoy their "interesting and well-structured" epidemiology classes taught by Jo Freudenheim, UB Distinguished Professor and chair of social and preventive medicine. Dolma credits SPHHP's dean, Maurizio Trevisan, M.D., and Dennis Bertram, M.D., director of the M.P.H. program, with helping her adjust to a "very different" Western educational system.

In addition to 10 days in Manhattan, Dhondup has ventured beyond Buffalo to Niagara Falls. "It's a lot colder here than in India, with many fewer people," he says, laughing. Dolma agrees that the climate took some getting used to, especially the shock of an early October snowstorm.

Along with missing their families—Dolma hasn't seen her 7-year-old daughter in over a year—Dolma and Dhondup prefer India's spicier home-cooked cuisine to "Buffalo wings." "We like to take hours to make a meal," Dolma says. "In America, people eat so fast."

### Once in a lifetime

The highlight of Dolma and Dhondup's time at UB, so far, was meeting the Dalai Lama. They were members of the delegation that met him at the air-

port. "I was shaking the entire time," recalls Dhondup.

Dhondup and Dolma also recall a private meeting between Tibetan students and His Holiness, where he noted the irony of the traditional Tibetan greeting—"tashi delek," or "all is well"—given the realities facing their displaced government, religion and culture.

For Dhondup, whose father, a monk, barely escaped Tibet in 1959, the emotional meeting with the exiled leader was further motivation to excel at UB.



Lhakpa Dolma (left) and Tsering Dhondup (far right) greet the 14th Dalai Lama at the Buffalo airport.

Photo: Steven Morse

"He said we are fortunate to get our education abroad, that we represent our people's future and must focus on our studies."

When they return to India, Dhondup and Dolma will represent SPHHP's growing global network of public health experts. "There isn't enough efficient, systematic medical planning going," Dhondup says. "I hope I can help start some new screening programs for cancer and other diseases."

—Lauren Newkirk Maynard



Boys drawing water from a protected well. Kabul, Afghanistan, 2003.

Photo courtesy of P. Ram

## Around the world, and back

Happily for SPHHP, its international enrollment appears to be self-perpetuating. "It seems we have a pre-made pipeline happening," says Dale Fish, associate dean of academic and student affairs. Students come from such countries as India, China, Taiwan, Canada and Panama.

Many international students hear about the school from friends and colleagues. "Word of mouth from satisfied students is getting the word back to their hometowns," Fish says.

Locally, SPHHP has begun a pilot mentorship program with Buffalo's Grover Cleveland High School to connect its international students with their UB counterparts. This way, says Fish, "high schoolers can discover that they can set their sights high academically and can enter health care careers they didn't know existed." The school plans to expand the program through UB's International Student and Scholar Services.

Several faculty are involved in international research and instruction. Pavani Ram, M.D., research assistant professor of social and preventive medicine, is a guest researcher at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention who investigates childhood illnesses such as diarrheal disease, the second leading killer of children less than 5 years old.

SPHHP also runs a study abroad student and faculty exchange program, called Health in Brazil, with Universidade Presidente Antonio Carlos, a private Brazilian university system. The program was established by John Stone, director of UB's Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE; see Page 1). He and colleague Mary Matteliano teach a three-credit elective course of the same name.

Machiko Tomita, clinical associate professor of rehabilitation science, sits on the UB Asian Studies Program's advisory council. Other faculty have ongoing relationships with international governments, nongovernmental organizations and private corporations.

"Our vision is international," says Maurizio Trevisan, M.D., dean of SPHHP. "We're very interested in improving public health throughout the world."

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is only one of CIRRIE's four primary initiatives. The other three are research information sharing, international exchange programs for researchers, and programming to promote the International Classification of Function Disability and Health (ICF).

CIRRIE's online database of research published outside of the U.S. contains some 28,000 citations with abstracts—some full texts—and is equipped with a variety of tools to assist researchers, such as an extensive thesaurus of rehabilitation research terms to aid searching (with Spanish and French translation of subject headings). Stone notes that CIRRIE's database, which is managed through UB's Health Sciences Library, is more comprehensive than commercial databases.

**“We see this as an international language of disability, as a Rosetta stone.”**

—John Stone

CIRRIE is now developing an online encyclopedia to further support the research litera-

ture database. “We decided it wasn't enough to have this big pot of journal articles because it's too much to wade through,” Stone says.

He and his colleagues have selected 400 topics for articles synthesizing rehabilitation research and are now choosing expert authors for the work. It will appear in English, Spanish and French. Stone notes that the current standard, five-volume encyclopedia of rehabilitation costs \$1,000. CIRRIE's online reference will be free.

Exchanging researchers directly supports information sharing. CIRRIE makes grants for airfare to facilitate visits by rehabilitation experts to the U.S. and from the U.S. to other countries.

The key to all of these kinds of exchange is a common set of terms, an international language of disability that will enable researchers and practitioners around the world to share data and discovery not only across borders, but across disciplines as well. This is the purpose of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. CIRRIE hosts an online, interactive ICF community of practice and sponsors workshops on the ICF system. CIRRIE will host an international conference with the WHO North American Collaborating Center on the ICF in Niagara Falls, N.Y. in June 2007.

“We see this as an international language of disability, as a Rosetta stone,” Stone says about the ICF. “It's important that the United States get on board with this. We don't want to be the last country in the world adopting this international system.”

In the arena of cultural competence, which is a multicultural rather than an international concern for U.S. service providers, Stone and collaborators are piloting curriculum materials at UB that weave

cultural competence throughout rehabilitation practice training. “We want students to understand this isn't some exotic thing you learn about once and then forget,” Stone says.

Stone himself is something of a one-man exchange program. He was raised in Buffalo, he served with the Peace Corps in India and worked in Greece; then he and his wife both took jobs in Brazil when they finished their Ph.D.s in educational technology at Florida State University. One job led to another and they stayed in Brazil for 17 years, completing the circle back to Buffalo in 1991.

Now at CIRRIE, the School of Public Health and Health Professions' unique portal for rehabilitation information exchange, Stone can reach the whole world every day. Wherever you are, you can do the same by going to [cirrie.buffalo.edu](http://cirrie.buffalo.edu).

—Judson Mead



### Saving lives, improving health

The School of Public Health and Health Professions saves lives and improves health for populations and individuals in Western New York and throughout the world.

### Make an impact: become our partner in health

We invite you to become our partner for better health by using the enclosed envelope to make a donation to the School of Public Health and Health Professions. Your gift will help broaden the impact of our education, research and community service.

You can also visit our Web site at [www.sphhp.buffalo.edu](http://www.sphhp.buffalo.edu) or call us at (716) 829-3434. Thank you for your support!

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Before joining Roswell Park, Giovino spent 11 years as an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office on Smoking and Health, serving as chief of the office's epidemiology branch for seven of those years. He also has held positions at the University of Rochester and the New York State Department of Health in Buffalo.

A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Giovino holds a master's degree in natural sciences and epidemiology and a doctorate in experimental pathology and epidemiology from UB.

**Boston APHA convention a success**

SPHHP was well represented at the annual American Public Health Association (APHA) convention in Boston, November 4-8. The school continues to increase its national presence, submitting strong faculty and student presentations and holding an alumni reception at the event.



**2006 AHA Heart Walk**

A spot of rain didn't dampen spirits at the annual American Heart Association's 2006 Heart Walk on September 23. Despite the weather, 112 SPHHP students, faculty and staff raised more than \$9,000 for research and education, once again placing the school among the top 10 local organizations for total dollars raised. Interns from the dietetics program and students from the Department of Exercise Science provided blood pressure readings and distributed important nutritional information to many of the 2,500 participants.

# A path to employment

Susan Nochajski, clinical associate professor of rehabilitation sciences and director of SPHHP's professional and graduate studies in occupational therapy, uses her experience in disabilities research to help high school students with disabilities find good jobs.

Funded by grants from the Department of Education, Nochajski developed a school-to-work transition program, the Work and Career Opportunities Program (WCOP). She is testing its efficacy in a two-year clinical trial involving three Buffalo high schools.

In its second year, the trial has about 50 students each in its treatment and control groups. There are four phases of treatment.



"Rick" worked at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens as part of the Work and Career Opportunities Program.

Phase one provides in-class training to develop social skills and vocational interests.

In the second "volunteer" phase, students try out non-paid jobs in their areas of interest, such as nursing, auto repair and construction. "One student wanted to be a basketball player and we placed him at Gold's Gym," Nochajski says. At every stage of the study, students are encouraged to get involved and develop a sense of self-determination.

In the third phase, students are placed in supported work environments where their progress is monitored closely by Nochajski's 10-member staff. The grant provides a minimum-wage paycheck.

The final phase is competitive paid employment, often through the same local employers who hosted the students in phase three.

Bryan, a senior at McKinley High School, is a student member of the WCOP advisory board. He plans to own a small construction company, starting with an apprenticeship in the carpenter's union.

Bryan's volunteer phase was spent with Habitat for Humanity, and his supported employment with the Massachusetts Avenue Project in Buffalo. Both phases gave him hands-on experience with home construction and renovation. During the employment phase, as "foreman" he assisted other student participants. "All kids should have an opportunity like this," he says.

Nochajski consults often with parents and special education teachers. So far, she is pleased with the trial's results and hopes to see UB's WCOP program implemented nationally. "There haven't been many clinical trials gathering hard data on such a program."



Photo: Nancy J. Parisi

**WHI appreciation reception**

More than 600 women came to UB on September 30 to celebrate the 12-year, \$625 million Women's Health Initiative (WHI). Nearly 4,000 women from Western New York and 163,000 nationwide participated in the WHI, the largest clinical trial ever undertaken in the U.S. Festivities included dedication of a pear tree planted on campus and presentation of a life-sized buffalo adorned with photos of the participants. Jean Wactawski-Wende, associate professor of social and preventive medicine, is the study's principal investigator.

# MyPyramid.gov—more than you realized

As a scientist working in the field of nutrition, I consider the 2005 U.S. Department of Agriculture dietary guidelines—what people often refer to as the “new food pyramid”—as a great improvement over the old food pyramid because it is so much more complex, reflecting much better the real complexity of nutrition.



But there’s a paradox in this improvement: the more detailed and nuanced the guidance is, the harder it is to get the message out to the public.

The original food pyramid, with its “bread, cereal, rice, and pasta” at the base and “fats, oils and sweets” at the apex, was easy to understand and remember because it was so simple. “New food guidance system” doesn’t sound as accessible, so the USDA was wise, in my opinion, to use a pyramid symbol (that incorporates a figure climbing its steps for exercise) under the name MyPyramid.

The other potential barrier to the very good information in the new guidelines is that if you don’t go to the USDA MyPyramid.gov Web site, you won’t get the full benefit from them. But if you do use the Web site,

you can get a tremendous amount of personalized information about healthy eating. You can use the site to analyze your diet, right down to the micronutrients you are (or are not) consuming. Explore the whole site—the resources are excellent.

What is most fundamentally different about this version of the guidelines is that it is much more science-based than the previous version. The guidelines are solidly based on published literature and reviewed by an advisory panel of independent scientists. I can look at the panel and tell by the names I know that the science is sound.

The two major departures in the guidance with respect to foods are the shift away from an undifferentiated recommendation for low fat intake and a new emphasis on whole grains.

The new message on fats doesn’t fit into a sound bite. Learning to avoid trans fats and saturated fats, and to consume more mono- and polyunsaturated fats, takes some adjustment. People still see “low fat” products as healthier. But I like to remind people that a fat-free cookie is not broccoli; and that salad with olive oil is healthy.

It takes the same kind of re-education to shift your understanding from the simple message that grains are good to the more complex message that it’s the kind of grain that is important.

Finally, the major change in logo—with the addition of a person climbing the pyramid to demonstrate the idea of balancing expenditure with intake—and the overall message that emphasizes the importance of body weight address the fact that obesity and lack of physical activity are major health concerns.

I can enthusiastically recommend that everyone go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov). And then go back for more.

*Christine Pelkman, assistant professor, Department of Nutrition and Exercise Science, is a widely published nutrition research scientist.*



Pelkman

Improving health for populations and individuals  
**impact**

The University at Buffalo is a premier public research university, the largest and most comprehensive campus in the State University of New York system. The School of Public Health and Health Professions is one of 12 schools that make UB New York’s leading public center for graduate and professional education and one of five schools that constitute UB’s Academic Health Center.

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