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Improving health for populations and individuals

impact

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Winter 2011

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Warren Perry (left), in the elegant apartment where he was a legendary host, and Al Rekate, here doing the university's business, were instrumental in creating the school that is the immediate ancestor of the School of Public Health and Health Professions. *Photos: Courtesy of University Archives*

Founding giants

J. Warren Perry was the "idea man," brimming with notions of how to build a new school out of his vision of allied health education. Albert C. Rekate, cardiologist and hospital leader, worked behind-the-scenes to support and encourage UB's newest academic enterprise.

Both Perry and Rekate died in 2010 and are being remembered for their professional verve, warm personalities and pioneering leadership of the former School of Health Related Professions (HRP), which became the School of Public Health and Health Professions.

At the time of HRP's founding, the U.S. was facing a shortage

of allied health providers and American universities were scrambling to define the budding disciplines. In a 1967 interview, Perry attributed the new era to an explosion of medical and scientific knowledge leading to increased specialization, the emergence of the health-team concept and manpower needs driven by the new Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Rekate, a UB professor of rehabilitation medicine and an administrator and later director of the present day Erie County Medical Center, was named acting dean of the embryonic school in 1965. The next year, UB recruited Perry from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration in Washington, D.C., where he had helped

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University at Buffalo The State University of New York

REACHING OTHERS

Networks work for SPHHP

I have been thinking about networks this fall, in both the older and newer uses of the word. At the School of Public Health and Health Professions, we're networking every way we can.

An instance of what I call the older sense, which usually involves picking up the telephone and speaking with someone, happened recently when I got a call from Philip Nasca, dean of the State University of New York at Albany School of Public Health, asking if we'd be interested in participating in an application for funds from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to establish a proposed Empire State Public Health Training Center.

We said yes, and after an intense, compressed collaboration between the schools, the project was awarded \$3.25 million. The new training center will bring needed resources to the public health workforce across upstate New York, between Albany and Buffalo. This is an ideal fit for our interest and expertise in rural public health.

So that's one-to-one networking: "Let's do something together." In parallel with that kind of relationship-building, we've started to build social networks, what I think of as many-to-many networking.

Enter "SPHHP" in a Google search window and it will give you the link to our school homepage at the top of the returns—that's the quickest way to get here if you don't have us bookmarked. On the homepage, click the Facebook icon and take a look through a new doorway into the school.

You will find several videos discussing different areas of our work—among them Randy Carter in biostatistics talking about the Population Health Observatory; Jean Wactawski-Wende talking about the Women's Health Initiative. On the lighter side, Alan Hutson, chair of biostatistics, gives a basic lesson in statistics by looking at taste-test results from a comparison of Duff's and Anchor Bar chicken wings.

We're also posting video clips of recent SPHHP graduates talking about their new jobs and their experiences here at the school.

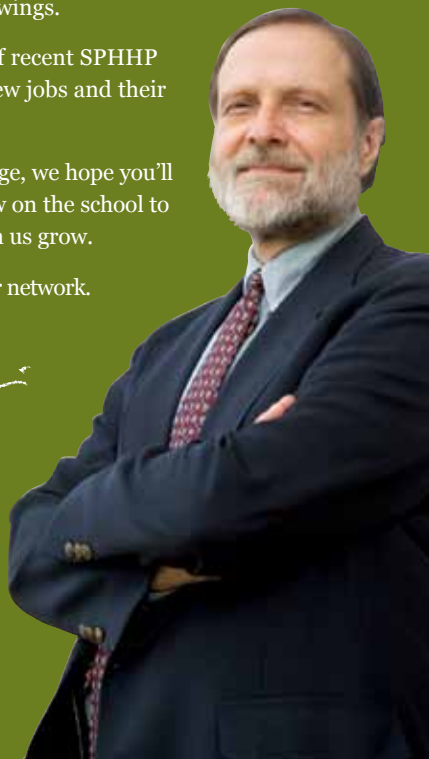
When you visit our Facebook page, we hope you'll "like" us to add that new window on the school to this newsletter as a way to watch us grow.

And, of course, share us with your network.



Lynn T. Kozlowski.

Dean and Professor of
Community Health and
Health Behavior



New undergraduate minor in statistics

In fall 2010, the Department of Biostatistics inaugurated an undergraduate minor in statistics.

What can an undergraduate education in statistics lead to? According to undergraduate director Chris Andrews in the Department of Biostatistics, it can expand opportunities in—and this is just a partial list—actuarial science, agriculture, biology, business, chemistry, economics, education, engineering, epidemiology, environmental science, finance, health sciences, marketing, pharmacology, public health and medicine, law, quality control and improvement, and risk assessment. It's a gateway to practically everything that depends on applied mathematics.

Students graduating with the new minor—the program consists of seven courses culminating in regression modeling, probability and statistics—will be prepared for graduate school in statistics or biostatistics and for some entry-level statistics-related positions in industry and government.

Honor for multidisciplinary MS research

Susan E. Bennett, clinical associate professor of rehabilitation science and neurology, received the Labe Scheinberg Award for her research presentation on multiple sclerosis at the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers' annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in June.

The award recognizes the best work presented at the meeting in the

field of neuro-rehabilitation in MS, and highlights the multidisciplinary approach of MS professionals. Labe Scheinberg was one of the earliest advocates for bringing together professionals from many disciplines to address the disease.

Bennett's presentation was titled "The Validity, Reliability and Sensitivity of Three Gait Measures in Multiple Sclerosis."

Bennett directs the MS Comprehensive Care Center at UB's Jacobs Neurological Institute/Department of Neurology located in Kaleida Health's Buffalo General Hospital. She also has conducted the wellness program at DeGraff Memorial Hospital in North Tonawanda, N.Y., for 18 years.

In 2008, Bennett received an award from the Foundation of the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers to establish and direct its national fellowship program for MS rehabilitation professionals. The consortium is a professional organization for multiple sclerosis health-care providers and researchers in North America.

Bonner named one of UB's "exceptional scholars"

Matthew Bonner, assistant professor of social and preventive medicine, was honored with an Exceptional Scholar Award for Young Investigators at UB's annual Celebration of Academic Excellence in April.

Bonner joined the department in 2005 and is the director of the MPH concentration in environmen-

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Parade of greats

Nation's leading statisticians visit SPHHP

When Randy Carter, professor and associate chair of the biostatistics department, volunteered to organize the department's seminar series for 2009-10, two important statisticians—Raymond Carroll from Texas A&M and Robert Strawderman from Cornell—had already been scheduled. Inspired by those choices, Carter set out to build a roster of speakers of equal eminence.

Carter remembers that the opportunity to hear and meet visiting leaders in statistics helped shape his career when he was a graduate student at Iowa State University and a young faculty member at the University of Florida. He wanted UB students and faculty to have the same experience.

In all, the Distinguished Scholars Lecture Series he put together brought eight “senior distinguished scholars,” as he styled them, to UB, along with four “distinguished young scholars” in a two-semester series of talks.

The fall semester was highlighted by the visits of Carroll and Thomas Fleming from the University of Washington Department of Biostatistics. C.R. Rao (see box) and Bradley Efron, both National Medal of Science Honorees, brought the series to a climactic end last spring. Rao maintains his long-time affiliation with the Department of Statistics at Pennsylvania State University and recently joined the Department of Biostatistics at UB. He is widely regarded as the

world's greatest living statistician. Efron, from Stanford University, is another major name in the field.

To assemble a superstar series, Carter asked colleagues and experts in epidemiology and public health, clinical trials, and bioinformatics and genetics statistics to name the best in their fields. He also began soliciting sponsors and calculated he would need to find some \$15,000 above the year's seminar budget.

Carter eventually lined up support for specific speakers from the school, his department, Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) and the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG) Statistical and Data Center, the Buffalo Niagara

chapter of the American Statistical Association, UB's New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences (CoE), and the school's Population Health Observatory.

Most of the speakers were able to come to Buffalo for two days to meet with department faculty and students and with faculty in SPHHP, the medical school, at RPCI and the CoE, and Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute.

And there was ceremony befitting the celebrity of the guests. UB Provost Satish Tripathi attended a dinner in Rao's honor after his presentation; Rao and his wife and daughter later hosted a reception for Efron, making the

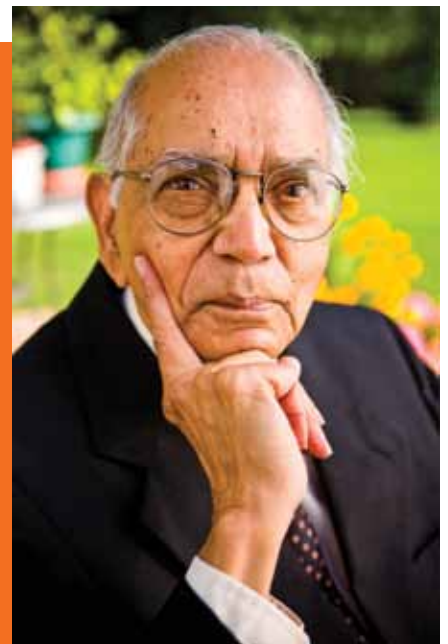
room they shared that evening the brightest place in the world of statistics.

In distributing credit for the success of the series, Carter names Alan Hutson, chair of biostatistics, and Lynn Kozlowski, dean of SPHHP; John Blessing of the GOG Statistical and Data Center; Bruce Holm and Russell Bissette of the CoE; and Jim Marshall, Candace Johnson and Donald “Skip” Trump of RPCI for supporting speaker visits; and Mark Brady of the GOG Statistical and Data Center for coordinating speaker visits to that facility. And he says it was department secretary Terry Sikorski who made everything run smoothly.

Statistical all-star lineup

The 2009-10 Biostatistics Distinguished Scholars presenters, listed in the order of their appearance. Senior Distinguished Scholars are indicated with an asterisk.

Alan Hutson, University at Buffalo; Ralitzia Gueorguieva, Yale University; Rongling Wu, Pennsylvania State University; Robert Strawderman, Cornell University; Thomas Fleming*, University of Washington; David Oakes*, University of Rochester; Raymond Carroll*, Texas A&M University; Richard Simon*, National Cancer Institute; Ronald Brookmeyer*, Johns Hopkins University; Elizabeth Thompson*, University of Washington; Jeffrey Morris, University of Texas, MD Anderson Medical Center; Michael Daniels, University of Florida; C.R. Rao*, Pennsylvania State University; Bradley Efron*, Stanford University.



C.R. Rao, widely regarded as the greatest living thinker in the world of statistics, has joined the SPHHP biostatistics faculty as a research professor.

Photo: Douglas Levere

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"Al paved the way during a tumultuous time in health-care delivery to see that our disciplines were respected in the overall health-care community."

Kathryn A. Sawner

shape the 1966 Allied Health Professions Training Act. Perry moved quickly to unify programs in physical therapy, occupational therapy and medical technology, all previously housed in the medical school. When HRP was formally dedicated in 1967, it was one of only a few such schools in the country.

Rekate's role was essential to the school's success, according to Kathryn A. Sawner, who was an assistant professor of physical therapy at that time. "Al was so supportive in those days, helping all of our various professions to achieve a greater

independence from the medical school. Al paved the way during a tumultuous time in health-care delivery to see that our disciplines were respected in the overall health-care community. Warren was out in front leading the school, but Al was advocating for us all the time."

Perry was successful in obtaining federal funds to develop allied-health training programs.

"The federal money was a big incentive to universities to put together what they had, and then start growing," says Thomas C. Robinson, emeritus dean and professor at the University of Kentucky College of Health Sciences and associate HRP dean from 1975-78. Perry, however, wanted to transcend vocational training and insisted on developing doctoral

programs from the outset. "Warren and some of the other pioneers started schools of allied health professions and then legitimized them in an academic setting," says Robinson.

Perry was a founding member of the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions and started its journal, serving as editor for many years.

"Warren was the big guru, clearly the leader in his vision for the school and where he thought allied health should be in the future," says Stephen L. Wilson, an assistant pro-

fessor under Perry and now retired from Ohio State University, where he directed the School of Allied Medical Professions and was associate dean in the medical school. "He was very strong in inter-professional education and the need for growth and strength of the professions and their role in health care."

Calling them his "kids," Perry mentored about a dozen former students and colleagues who became deans at allied health schools around the nation.

"We all dearly loved him and felt that he loved us," says Elizabeth King, dean of the University of Cincinnati College of Allied Health Sciences and an assistant professor under Perry.

"When you worked with Warren, he shared his entire life with you—all of his administrative detail, all of his experience," adds Joseph Nechasek, former dean of allied health and nursing at the University of Bridgeport and Perry's intern while a UB graduate student.

Perry was a peerless social host and this was part of his networking. His apartment was filled with objets d'art and memorabilia associated with a lifelong love of opera.

Perry endowed the J. Warren Perry Scholarship Fund, as well as the J. Warren Perry Lecture Fund. Rekate and

his wife, Linda, endowed the school's Dean's Award to recognize outstanding faculty; they also contributed seed money to develop an undergraduate core research curriculum in the school. Rekate endowed several awards and chairs at UB, including the Albert and Elizabeth Rekate Professorship in Medicine.

"Each man had his own style and they were quite different men," says Dale R. Fish, associate dean of the School of Public Health and Health Professions. "But they shared dedication, a vision and a passion, and they cared about students and quality of education. Both Warren Perry and Al Rekate were instrumental in the success we've had thus far."



"When you worked with Warren, he shared his entire life with you—all of his administrative detail, all of his experience."

Joseph Nechasek



Nursing students watch a demonstration of a no-lift technology at the opening of SPHHP's new Safe Patient Handling Lab.

Handle with care

Occupational safety in health care is focus of new center

Representatives of health-care unions, hospital administrators, members of the Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health, elected officials and faculty, students and staff from SPHHP gathered in Diefendorf Annex on the UB South Campus on May 21, 2010, to open the school's Safe Patient Handling Lab and Training Center.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), health-care workers have one of the highest rates of serious musculoskeletal injuries compared to other strenuous occupations, including construction and mining.

OSHA reports that each day the average hospital or nursing-home nurse performing direct patient care lifts the combined patient weight of 1.8 tons and certified nursing assistants lift more than that. Over time, repetitive lifting and repositioning of patients leads to injury, lost work days and reduced quality of care.

Most patient-handling injuries can be prevented by eliminating the manual handling tasks with so-called "zero-lift" equipment and policies.

The mission of the new UB center is to prevent injuries related to lifting by educating students in the health professions and hospital and nursing-home staff in the use of modern zero-lift, safe-patient handling equipment and repositioning devices.

Pat McCarthy, a registered nurse at Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, paraphrased an unspoken rule in her profession that nurses will do anything to give the best possible care for patients, "even if you break your back doing it."

But with new training and new technology, nurses can now deliver care with the same intensity without risking their safety.

"Not only do work-related injuries affect the quality and cost of health of care, they also impact the quality of life

of our health-care providers" SPHHP Dean Lynn T. Kozlowski said at the opening.

The new center is equipped with the latest mechanical equipment for lifting patients, a modern hospital bed and patient repositioning devices, funded in part through legislative grants.

One of the biggest obstacles to the adoption of zero-lift policies in health-care settings has been a reluctance to invest in equipment, especially since most hospitals and nursing homes operate on slim revenue margins. But advocates say facilities that adopt zero-lift procedures achieve a return on the investment that makes good business sense, as well as being positive for staff health and morale.

Kaleida Health, Western New York's largest health-care provider, spent more than \$10 million in workers' compensation claims in 2002. In 2004, Kaleida invested \$6 million on safe patient-handling equipment and education in nine different facilities. Within

two years, it saw a 70 percent reduction in employee injuries related to working with patients and some \$6.7 million in savings associated with injury claims, lost work days and overtime.

Most educational programs do not currently provide zero-lift training for students in the health professions and most health-care facilities do not have adequate safe-patient handling equipment or training for their employees.

"What better way to change the culture of safe patient handling than to start with our future health-care providers?" asks Andrew Ray, assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Science, who will direct the center.

Ray, who trained as a physical therapist, says a zero-lift program can now be incorporated into UB's physical therapy, occupational therapy and nursing curricula. He hopes to develop interdisciplinary learning objectives for all the health professions at UB.



New window on health

SPHHP Division of Environmental Sciences to have global focus

In January 2010, SPHHP established the Division of Environmental Health Sciences in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine. James Olson, professor of pharmacology and toxicology in UB's School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and a research professor of social and preventive medicine, is director of the new division.

UB has a long history of multidisciplinary research in environmental health. Olson gave the new division immediate breadth and scope by establishing cross-discipline affiliations with more than 30 faculty members in environmental epidemiology; toxicology, environmental and occupational health; environmental engineering; environmental chemistry; environmental geography; environmental law; and other areas.

"They help put a face on the

division," Olson says of the faculty who have agreed to participate in the division in research, lectures and thesis-committee service.

And, after a national search, the division has hired Xuefeng Ren, associate molecular toxicology specialist at the University of California, Berkeley.

"We wanted to get the best possible environmental-health person to help with instructional needs and research," Olson says. "I think he'll be a strong addition. He works with human populations, which is very relevant to public health and in-vitro cell culture models in the lab to complement the work he's doing with populations."

Olson hopes to recruit additional faculty dedicated to the division.

To support the environmental health concentration in

the Master of Public Health (MPH) program, the new division participated with Lina Mu, assistant professor of social and preventive medicine, in the development of a course in advanced environmental health sciences; the division is now developing a course in environmental toxicology and risk assessment.

Olson sees a large potential for growth. "Trained professionals are needed to address important environmental-health issues in the U.S. and throughout the world," he says.

Growing health concerns in global environments are the focus of several current division research projects.

Olson and Matthew Bonner, assistant professor of social and preventive medicine, are involved with a research project in collaboration with Egypt's Menoufia University to assess exposures to organo-

"Trained professionals are needed to address important environmental-health issues in the U.S. and throughout the world,"

James Olson

phosphate pesticides in Egyptian cotton-field workers and to determine if there are neurotoxic effects. Olson foresees the focus of the research being extended to include the effects that pesticide contamination of the food and water supply has for these farm families.

In Beijing, Mu is leading a research project on the effects of air pollution before, during and after the 2008 Olympic Games. In an effort to improve air quality for the Olympics, the Chinese government sus-

Tracking external effects on pregnancy

Since she joined the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine in 2007, epidemiologist Carole Rudra has been looking at risk factors for two well-known and potentially serious prenatal disorders: gestational diabetes mellitus, a condition that elevates a pregnant woman's previously normal blood glucose levels, and preeclampsia, where high blood pressure and protein in the urine develop. Both disorders affect about 5 percent of all pregnant women in the United States.



Carole Rudra

Rudra earned an MPH at Emory University and a PhD at the University of Washington, where she focused on environmental exposures and pregnancy outcomes. As a postdoctoral fellow at Washington, Rudra was first author on a prospective study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop a research model that could predict women's air-pollutant exposures to carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter right before and during pregnancy, with the goal of gauging the subsequent risk for either preeclampsia or preterm (early) delivery. Using data collected from a previous study of nearly 4,000 women in the Seattle, Wash. area, Rudra's team showed that its model worked well compared with a blood marker of exposure. Results were published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Rudra is also interested in how the built environment affects health. With co-investigators from Washington and UB, she recently received an NIH grant to track the daily movements of study participants using smartphones enabled with GIS (geographic information systems) technology.

"The technology has great potential to improve epidemiological studies that were previously reliant on paper questionnaires," Rudra says.

The information on participants' daily movements will be used to design models of their exposures to air pollutants. This method will be an improvement over current methods, which base exposures only on participants' home locations.

pending operations at most of the factories around Beijing and restricted motor-vehicle traffic. The circumstance created a natural experiment, according to Mu, to study short-term biological response to both decreases and increases in ambient air pollution, related to changes in oxidative damage and systemic inflammatory responses.

"The ultimate goal," Olson says, "is to have an active, multidisciplinary group of environmental-health scientists who are willing to collaborate and utilize the expertise from these disciplines to study environmental-health concerns and try to improve the quality of life wherever possible by providing a better understanding of environmental and genetic factors that may impact populations."

The school and the division have begun to explore possible collaborations with multinational companies such as Lancaster, N.Y.-based Ecology and Environment.

On campus, UB's Toxicology Research Center has a facility for chemical analysis that

research teams use for collaborative work. "We make extensive use of the center's analytical facilities for our human health studies," says Olson. "Such shared research facilities are needed to support our research activities."

He notes that the division's multidisciplinary research supports two UB 2020 strategic strengths: molecular recognition in biological systems and bioinformatics, and health and wellness across the lifespan.

"It's in keeping with the idea that medicine is committed to translational research and that's essentially what we're doing in environmental health," Olson observes. "We are doing translational work where we're not necessarily going from the bench to the bedside, but from the bench to the community—to the population that needs to be served by understanding the environmental-health implications of where they live and how they work."

Full-building makeover

The dust is flying in Kimball Tower as the home of the School of Public Health and Health Professions undergoes its most extensive renovation since its conversion from a dormitory in the 1970s.

More than \$10 million in interior and exterior renovations—\$2.7 million in masonry restoration and \$7.5 million in interior work—began five years ago and is expected to be mostly completed by 2012.

The interior rehab project features a complete renovation of floors 2 through 11. Structural work includes replacement of concrete walls with drywall, updating of the electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling systems—the building will now have central air conditioning—and the installation of new data lines and wireless access on every floor. Cosmetic work includes painting, new carpeting, new tile in the foyers and new office doors, as well as new window blinds, kitchens and bathrooms, which will be ADA compliant.

The building's first floor will receive its makeover in summer 2011, with an updating of the heating and cooling systems and current classroom space, and new paint and carpeting. The work also will include the addition of "learning landscape" areas, sim-



Reconfiguring the spaces in Kimball Tower has required removing some existing walls and erecting new ones.

ilar to those in Knox Hall and the Natural Sciences Complex on the North Campus, where students have access to data connections, computer stations and comfortable furniture—all designed to create more inviting places for students to gather.

First-floor space previously occupied by the School of Nursing, which left Kimball in the summer and fall of 2009 to occupy new space in Wende and Beck halls, will be renovated into classroom and lab space.

The benefits of the renovation work for faculty, staff and students are significant.

For one thing, it will bring more of the school's outlying departments to Kimball. The Department of Biostatistics, now located in Farber Hall, is expected to move to the seventh floor of Kimball at the end of this month. And school officials are in the early stages of discussing a possible move of lab and classroom space, from Diefendorf Annex to Kimball.

Bringing more of the school together in one building "helps improve communication and collaboration between the various departments, and contributes to a better sense of camaraderie," says Dean Lynn Kozlowski.

Officials note that the planning process for Kimball Tower is ongoing and flexible. "With the school being spread out around the campus, we are continually trying to revise the plans to best suit the school as a whole, while at the same time providing adequate and appropriate office, lab and teaching space," says April Whitehead, assistant to the dean.

The top-to-bottom renovations include extensive infrastructure upgrades that don't show when the halls are put back together.





Exterior renovations on this side of Kimball Tower were completed in fall 2010; they will begin on the other side this spring.

The School of Nursing occupied the upper floors of Kimball for more than 30 years. The School of Public Health and Health Professions now is the lone occupant of the building. Departments residing in Kimball are Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, Community Health and Health Behavior, and Rehabilitation Science. The Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information Exchange also is located in Kimball, as well as part of the Center for Assistive Technology.



All done: the entrance lobby on fourth floor of Kimball Tower, which houses the SPHP administrative offices.

Photos: Nancy J. Parisi

: COMMUNITY PARTNER :

Kristina Young

Executive Director, Western New York Public Health Alliance



Q: What is the Western New York Public Health Alliance?

A: The Western New Public Health Alliance was established in 2004. Our mission is to lead the development of public- and private-sector partnerships and collaborations that coordinate resources and empower communities to ensure the health, safety and wellness of populations in the counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming.

Q: Who belongs to the alliance?

A: Our board of directors consists of the commissioners and public health directors of the region's eight counties and four additional members representing western New York health care, academic, and not-for-profit community-based organizations. Our operating support is contributed by the eight counties and by administered grants.

Q: What kinds of projects is it involved in?

A: Since 2006, the alliance has administered more than \$3 million in federal and state grants to support public health services in its member counties. Grants are implemented through sub-contracts with partner organizations. Partner organizations have included the Erie County Department of Health, Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, National Opinion Research Center, University at Albany School of Public Health, UB School of Public Health and Health Professions and Sisters of Charity Hospital.

Current alliance grant programs funded by the New York State Department of Health are looking at Childhood Asthma, HIV/AIDS, Cancer Services prenatal and perinatal health.

Q: How do the alliance and the School of Public Health and Health Professions interact?

A: The alliance collaborates with the School of Public Health and Health Professions through the Office of Public Health Practice to identify and help coordinate student experiences and projects with the region's departments of public health.

Q: What's next for the alliance?

A: A primary future priority of the alliance is to continue securing and administering grants in the most efficient ways possible to support community public health needs and innovations throughout the eight-county region.



LEAVING A LEGACY

YOUR WILL, YOUR VALUES, YOUR IMPACT ON THE FUTURE

According to Leave a Legacy, a national organization that promotes planned giving, a recent study shows that about 80 percent of Americans give to charity on an annual basis, while only about 8 percent of folks have established planned gifts in support of their long-held charitable interests. Clearly, Americans are charitable. So why aren't more folks supporting their favorite charities through bequests?

Many people erroneously believe that a bequest to a charity has to be a big amount—a privilege reserved for the very wealthy. Contrary to popular belief, however, bequests to charities come in all sizes. As your favorite charity will likely tell you, any amount you give will be helpful and appreciated.

Some folks are also concerned that they won't have enough money to live on if they make a charitable bequest. It is important to understand that bequests are paid from whatever is left over after your death. Furthermore, it is quite simple to structure your bequest so that

it is paid out of your residuary estate—meaning the charity receives its gift only after all of your payments to loved ones are made.

Using a bequest as a way to leave your mark on our world can make a tremendous impact. For example, here at the University at Buffalo, bequests from our donors have made it possible for hundreds of students to attend college, to receive a scholarship, and take that first step toward achieving the American Dream. Others have established professorships—named in honor of the donor—that allow UB to recruit top-notch faculty to teach in Buffalo. Some have opted to support specific research initiatives to help eradicate diseases like Alzheimer's, cancer and high-blood pressure. While bequests to charitable organizations are small in number, their impact is dramatic.

If you support a charitable organization with an annual gift, I encourage you to contact that charity to learn more about your planned giving options.

Wendy Irving, assistant vice president for gift planning, University Development

For more information call UB's Office of Gift Planning toll-free at (877) 825-3422 or go to www.leavealegacy.org



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tal health. His research primarily focuses on the roles of occupational and or environmental exposures and genetic susceptibility in the development of cancer. In particular, he conducts research investigating occupational exposure to pesticides and cancer, exposure to ambient air pollution and breast cancer, and genetic susceptibility to lung cancer from residential radon and exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon. Before coming to UB, he was a postdoctoral fellow in the Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch, Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics at the National Cancer Institute.

The citation for the honor states that it "celebrates a recent superior achievement of a scholar in his/her field of study. Such an achievement will have distinguished the recipient as an up-and-coming scholar, as well as earned the individual acclaim for his/her work, which could be a published work or other scholastic or artistic endeavor."

National honor for physical therapy student

Robert A. Richards, DPT '10, received an American Physical Therapy Association Mary McMillan Scholarship Award, which recognizes students across the country who exhibit superior scholastic ability and potential for future professional contributions. His was the first Mary McMillan Scholarship awarded to a UB student. Richards graduated first in his DPT class, was nominated to five honor societies and has received numerous scholarships, academic awards, service awards and leadership

awards attesting to his energetic dedication and commitment to the profession and local community. Mary McMillan (1889-1959) was a pioneer of physical therapy in the United States and abroad and the founding president of the American Physical Therapy Association.

OT grad stars in India

Asmita Sarang, MS (OT) '10, was awarded the All India Occupational Therapists' Association trophy for the best paper in the mental health category at the association's 47th annual national conference in Ahmedabad, India, in January 2010. Her paper, "Adverse Psychological Health of the Care Givers of Older Adults with Dementia: Indian vs. U.S.," which was based on her MS thesis, was later published in the association's journal.

RESEARCH NEWS

Post-Katrina Effects on Police Officers

John Violanti, research associate professor of social and preventive medicine and a former member of the New York State Police, will spend the next two years studying post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the long-term effects of Hurricane Katrina on police officers who worked during the disaster.

Funded by a \$156,750 grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Violanti and colleagues will examine the long-term, post-Katrina mental-health and social impact on police officers who policed the disaster in St. Bernard Parish, located southeast of New

Orleans and one of the areas most devastated by the hurricane.

The study proposes to assess the possible persistence and/or presence of mental-health symptoms in the police officers since Katrina.

Researchers will describe the demographic and psychosocial characteristics among police officers to determine if psychological symptoms are connected with a variety of life events associated with the hurricane.

Violanti and his colleagues also will gather data to develop future interventions tailored to the specific needs of the officers and, in addition to publishing the results of their research on this traumatic event, will pass them along to agencies and emergency responders who could use the findings in the future.

Grant awards

Jean Wactawski-Wende, professor and associate chair of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, is principal investigator (PI) on a five-year, \$8.2 million award for the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) provided by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute to continue the WHI's research into many chronic diseases of aging, including cardiovascular disease, cancer and stroke. Other SPHP faculty involved in WHI-related research include Matthew Bonner, Amy Millen, Michael Lamont, Heather Ochs-Balcom and Chris Andrews.

Jim Lenker, assistant professor of rehabilitation science, is co-PI on a five-year, \$4.75 million grant for a new Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Universal

Design in the Built Environment, a partnership between UB and the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The center will focus on making housing and public spaces more accessible for people with and without disabilities.

John Stone, clinical associate professor of rehabilitation science, is PI on a \$2 million grant from the NIDRR to continue the work of the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE). CIRRIE will continue to expand its online Database of International Rehabilitation Research, disseminate international information resources, and develop educational resources for training future rehabilitation professionals.

New angle on breast cancer genetics

Heather Ochs-Balcom, assistant professor of social and preventive medicine, is leading a study investigating the genetic mechanism underlying the association of a specific estrogen receptor and breast-cancer risk.

The work represents new territory for the study of breast-cancer genetics and is being funded by a five-year, \$856,979 career development award from the National Cancer Institute.

Ochs-Balcom says that she and colleagues are exploring a newly recognized source of genetic diversity that is inherited, called copy number variation, which has not been widely studied.

The University at Buffalo is a premier research-intensive public 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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: RESIDENT EXPERT :

Is a completely plant-based diet healthy?

I am a registered dietitian. I know a lot about food. So I felt some professional curiosity when my environment-conscious son challenged me to try a vegan lifestyle for two months—the vegan diet is entirely plant-based, excluding all meat (including poultry and fish) and animal products (all dairy and eggs).

I didn't particularly want to (No ice cream? No Italian meatballs? I'll feel so deprived!), but he's a law student, so he argues a good case. That was in July 2009. I have been eating a vegan diet ever since.

This is my report: As a direct result of changing to a plant-based lifestyle, I lost more than 10 pounds in the first six months; my fiber intake went up as fat intake went down; my lipid levels are the best they've been in years. I'm eating lighter, I'm cooking delicious food and I don't miss the foods I left behind. And I'm being kinder to the environment.

I don't push this way of eating, but I do recommend it because there is evidence that a plant-based diet may help protect against or control coronary artery disease and diabetes. A 20-year research study conducted by Caldwell B. Esselstyn (Cleveland Clinic) indicates that a vegan diet promotes heart health.



Elizabeth Raleigh

In 2009, the American Dietetic Association issued a position statement on plant-based diets that says, in part, "Appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate and may provide health benefits in the prevention of certain diseases." The statement goes on to say such diets are applicable for "all stages of the lifecycle including pregnancy, infancy, childhood and adolescence, and for athletes."

The two most common questions about plant-based diets are how do you get enough calcium to keep your bones strong if you don't

consume dairy products, and how do you get enough protein to maintain muscle strength if you don't eat meat or eggs?

There is calcium in vegetables, legumes (beans), grains and fruit—the four basic food groups in the plant-based diet. Also, protein in animal products can cause an increased loss of calcium in the urine when compared to protein from plant sources.

With respect to protein, Americans have been encouraged to eat more protein than we need, and there are plenty of plant-based protein sources—meat and dairy don't have an "exclusive" on protein.

If you want to investigate a plant-based diet, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine website (www.pcrm.org) is a great place to start. It has a wealth of sensible and easy-to-understand information.

Becoming a vegan is a dramatic lifestyle change. But sometimes dramatic change is good. and trying a plant-based diet is a very healthy way to shake up your life. Take the two month vegan challenge!

Elizabeth Raleigh is director of SPHHP's dietetic internship program.

Photo: Douglas Levere