

Improving health for populations and individuals

# impact

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Winter 2012

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Elizabeth Gage, assistant professor in SPHHP's Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, is studying how social class affects the way parents of pediatric cancer patients manage their child's illness. "Our results have really shown that there are important differences in the actual things parents are doing by class."

# How families cope with pediatric cancer

While working toward her PhD in sociology at UB, Elizabeth Gage developed an interest in how stressful events impact families. She began studying families of pediatric cancer patients for her dissertation and, with colleagues from Roswell Park Cancer Institute, turned that into a study funded by the National Cancer Institute.

Last fall, Gage accepted a position at UB as an assistant professor in the School of Public Health and Health Professions' Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, where she has continued her research.

Gage's ultimate goal is to reveal specific findings on how social class affects parents' experi-

ences with the care of their sick child. "This project brings up the sometimes-not-politically-correct idea that a social class impacts how individuals think of their role in health care, the health-related activities they engage in and how they interact with physicians," says Gage. The study involving 76 parents of pediatric

cancer patients began about three years ago. Gage and a graduate assistant recently completed collecting data for the study and are in the process of analyzing that research, which consisted of ethnography, in-depth interviews and surveys. "Our results have really shown that there are

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University at Buffalo The State University of New York

REACHING OTHERS

# In pursuit of academic excellence

On Sept., 23, 2011, UB officially embarked on a new era with the investiture of the university's 15th president, Satish K. Tripathi. Since assuming his duties this past spring, Dr. Tripathi has continued to be an avid supporter of UB 2020 and, now, NYSUNY 2020.

The School of Public Health and Health Professions is confident in Dr. Tripathi's leadership. We share his goal of achieving academic excellence in everything that we do. This is truly an invigorating time, both for the university and SPHHP itself.

During his investiture address, Dr. Tripathi spoke of his plan to hire 300 new faculty members—100 of these positions would be endowed—and to raise \$200 million in endowments for student scholarships. The School of Public Health and Health Professions lends its support in building its share of chairs.

As you will see throughout this issue, SPHHP is engaged in an array of research activities that uphold our commitment to UB's mission of academic excellence. I encourage you to read this issue cover to cover to gain a more comprehensive understanding of just some of the great work members of our school have been engaged in recently.

Please do not stop there, however. Spread the word throughout the community by telling your friends and neighbors about our school. It works. Recently, I was speaking with a master's of public health student and asked how she learned about our program. She said a woman at her local gym told her about it.

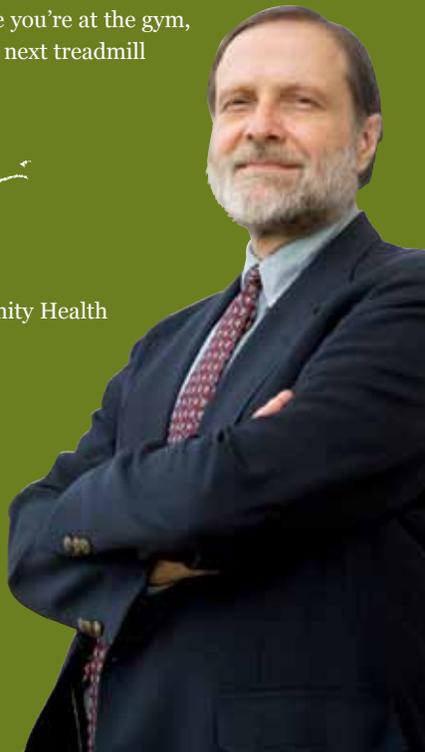
I would like to encourage everyone reading this also to help point prospective students in our direction, whether by sending them to our Web page or encouraging them to follow us on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

And feel free to advise them to visit our website, where they can review previous issues of Impact to learn more about the school. Better yet, next time you're at the gym, be sure to tell the person at the next treadmill about SPHHP!



Lynn T. Kozlowski

Dean and Professor of Community Health and Health Behavior



## Top 10 cited paper in Biometrics

Three members of SPHHP's Department of Biostatistics published a highly cited paper in the prestigious journal *Biometrics*. The paper, co-authored by Jihnhee Yu, Albert Vexler and Lili Tian, was a top 10 cited paper in 2010, a significant achievement for the department and the school.

The paper, titled "Analyzing incomplete data subject to a threshold using empirical likelihood methods: An application to a pneumonia risk study in an ICU setting," was published in the March 2010 edition of *Biometrics*.

"This paper is important from a number of fronts. This is the type of paper that is important relative to our AAU standing, which puts weight on cited papers. *Biometrics* is one of the premier biostatistical journals, so this enhances our department's reputation," explains Alan Hutson, chair of the Department of Biostatistics.

"The paper itself demonstrates good 'teamwork' among our faculty members," Hutson continues. "I believe this is the type of paper that also was instrumental in Drs. Vexler and Yu being awarded an R03 this year for which Frank Scannapieco (chair, Department of Oral Biology, School of Dental Medicine) and I are co-investigators."

The article abstract reads in part:

"The initial detection of ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP) for inpatients at an intensive care unit needs composite symptom evalu-

ation using clinical criteria such as the clinical pulmonary infection score (CPIS). When CPIS is above a threshold value, bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) is performed to confirm the diagnosis by counting actual bacterial pathogens. Thus, CPIS and BAL results are closely related and both are important indicators of pneumonia whereas BAL data are incomplete. To compare the pneumonia risks among treatment groups for such incomplete data, we derive a method that combines nonparametric empirical likelihood ratio techniques with classical testing for parametric models. This technique augments the study power by enabling us to use any observed data."

## First statistics minors graduate

The Department of Biostatistics graduated the first members of its new statistics minor in June 2011.

The minor prepares students for graduate study in statistics/biostatistics, and for some entry-level positions in industry and government, including with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Disease Control and the Bureau of Labor.

Statistics minors must take seven courses (26 credits), including four upper-division classes such as Regression Analysis and Introduction to Statistical Inference.

Five students received the minor in statistics in June: Xiao Liu, Rebecca Hager, Nicholas Sorrentino, Thomas

[Continued on Page 8]

# Gresham professorship off and running

This past spring, the School of Public Health and Health Professions hosted its inaugural Glen E. Gresham Visiting Professor in Rehabilitation Science, a position endowed by the late Albert C. Rekate, a veteran UB medical school faculty member, and his wife, Linda.

Glen E. Gresham, professor emeritus of rehabilitation medicine, requested that the visiting professorship be dedicated to Rekate, who was known as a generous benefactor of the health sciences at UB. Rekate died in February 2010 at age 93.

The professorship began in the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, but was halted once the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine was dissolved. The School of Public Health and Health Professions felt it was a natural fit for the school and, despite a tight timeline to establish the professorship and schedule its first lecture, made it happen.

The Glen E. Gresham Visiting Professor in Rehabilitation Science features a nationally or internationally recognized authority in an area directly related to rehabilitation science. “It really is a tremendous showcase for rehabilitation science and for the school,” says Dale Fish, SPHHP associate professor and associate dean for academic and student affairs.

Fish adds that the lecture given by the Gresham visiting professor is a good public outreach tool that also provides the school’s students with the opportunity to learn from the best.

Alan M. Jette, BS ’73 (physical therapy), director of the Health and Disability Research Institute at Boston University School of Public Health, where he is also professor of health policy and management, kicked off the professorship. Jette’s research interests include late-life exercise, evaluation of treatment outcomes, and the measurement, epidemiology and prevention of disability. On May 6,

Jette gave a lecture in Harriman Hall on UB’s South Campus titled “Issues in Rehabilitation Science and Disability: Implications for Public Health.”

“We were very pleased to get Alan. He turned out to be a tremendous initial visiting professor,” says Fish. “Alan is one of the most prominent physical therapists in the nation.”

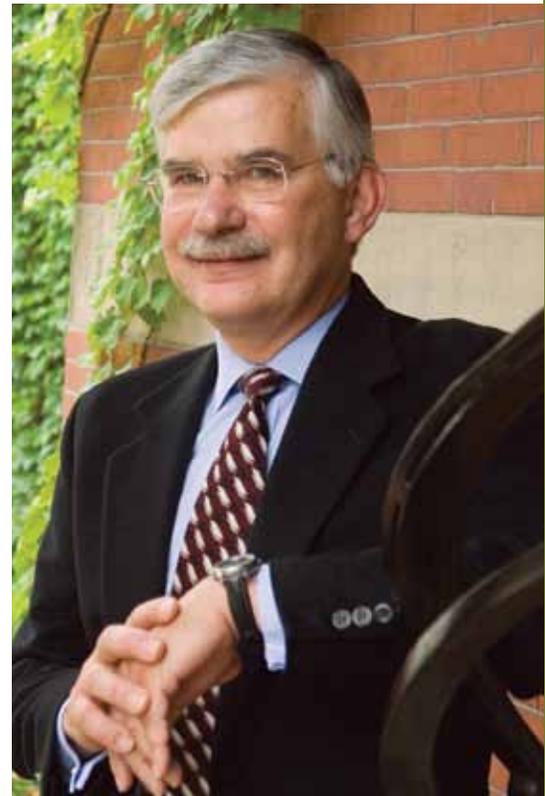
The day began with a faculty conversation with Jette, moderated by Kirk Personius and Susan Nochajski, clinical associate professors in Rehabilitation Science. Next Jette was given a tour of the Behling Simulation Center, followed by a student forum moderated by Jake McPherson ’11 (physical therapy).

As part of his visit, Jette met with various community partners and helped to reinforce the school’s importance in the community. “It was a stellar beginning and sets a high bar for continuing this,” says Fish. “We’re very excited about it.”

In addition to his lecture, Jette offered high praise for the School of Public Health and Health Professions. “He told us something that we expected was true, but it was good to hear from Alan. He said the configuration of professional programs in our school is unique and excellent. It was great to hear him say it and drive it home,” Fish says.

Complementing the core public health programs, SPHHP also offers programs in dietetics, nutrition and exercise science.

The event committee is planning the second Gresham Visiting Professorship event, likely to occur in March 2012.



Alan M. Jette, BS ’73 (physical therapy), served as Gresham visiting professor in May. He gave a lecture titled “Issues in Rehabilitation Science and Disability: Implications for Public Health.”

Gresham, the visiting professorship’s namesake, served UB for more than two decades. He chaired the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine in the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Erie County Medical Center.

In addition, Gresham served on the faculty at both Yale University and Ohio State University medical schools.

—David J. Hill

# Leading ladies

## Series highlights prominent women statisticians

The School of Public Health and Health Professions' Department of Biostatistics has organized a seminar series this year that features several world-renowned women statisticians.

The goal of the series is to expose people to and expand their understanding of cutting-edge research in statistics and biostatistics, says the event's organizer, Jihnhee Yu, assistant professor in the Department of Biostatistics. Attendees also learn about current trends in statistics and biostatistics.

Yu hopes that participants also will learn about and gain a better understanding of the leading roles of women in statistics research. Traditionally, women have been underrepresented in research in math and science, says Yu. This trend has been continuously changing, however, and now numerous women researchers are working in both fields.

The discipline of statistics is no exception. The presence of women in statistical research is fast-growing. For example, based on a report from the American Statistical Association's (ASA) Committee on Women in Statistics, only 20 percent of participants for talks and posters at the 1996 Joint Statistical Meeting in Chicago were women. By the time the 2004 Joint Statistical Meeting took place in Toronto, however, approximately 30 percent of the participants were women.

"Many female statisticians carry out statistical research in medicine and genetics, which produces groundbreaking results that significantly impact the statistical data analysis and the public health research in general," Yu explains.

By inviting renowned female statisticians to participate in the series, she adds, the Department of Biostatistics has helped UB's biostatistics program gain exposure at the national level.

**"Many female statisticians carry out statistical research in medicine and genetics, which produces groundbreaking results..."**

*Jihnhee Yu  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Biostatistics*

**Marie Davidian**, William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor of Statistics at North Carolina State University and president-elect of the ASA, began the series on Sept. 1. Davidian presented her cutting-edge research on robust estimation of group differences in a non-randomized study setting, as well as her vision as ASA president-elect on the role of the organization's local chapters.

Davidian said she was impressed by the progress and liveliness of UB's biostatistics department, as well as support the department receives at the school and university levels.

Continuing the series in September and October were **Nan Laird**, professor of biostatistics at Harvard University; **Sally W. Thurston**, associate professor of biostatistics and associate professor of oncology, University of Rochester; and **Kelly H. Zou**, director of statistics at Pfizer Inc.'s Specialty Care Business Unit.

Laird is well-known for pioneering many statistical methods and seminal papers, including the expectation-maximization



LAIRD

algorithm. Her current research interests include statistical genetics, longitudinal studies, missing or incomplete data, and analysis of multiple informant data. She currently collaborates on genetic studies in bipolar disorder, asthma and lung disease.

Thurston is also director of design, biostatistics and clinical research ethics at the University of Rochester's Clinical and Translational



THURSTON

Sciences Institute. Her research includes modeling multiple outcomes, measurement error, non-parametric smoothing, Bayesian inference and biomarkers relevant to cancer risk estimates.

Formerly associate professor of radiology at Harvard Medical School and director of biostatistics at Children's Hospital



ZOU

Boston, Zou is a renowned researcher in receiver operating characteristic curve analysis. Her research interests also

include health care policy, accuracy and reliability measures, evaluations of complex high-dimensional and observational non-interventional data.

The series continues Feb. 9 with a talk by **Germaine M. Buck Louis**, director and senior investigator in the Division of Epidemiology Statistics and Prevention Research at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Her research focuses on women and children's

health research and statistical research in accordance with the aim and scope of NICHD, including endometriosis, infant development screening programs and longitudinal investigation of fertility and the environment, and analysis of pregnancy outcome data. She is a former professor in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.

Also speaking on a date to be determined will be **Nicole Lazar**, professor of statistics at the University of Georgia

and an affiliated faculty member with the Center for Health Statistics, University of Illinois at Chicago.

She is a prominent researcher in analysis of functional MRI data, contributor to the FIASCO software for fMRI data analysis, and heads an fMRI statistics research group at the University of Georgia. Her research includes likelihood theory, applications in social and behavioral science, model selection and interpretation, and defining the role of statistics in society.

## : COMMUNITY PARTNER :

# Goshin takes lead on Office of Global Health Initiatives

When he graduated from the UB medical school in 1970, Arthur Goshin became assistant health commissioner for Erie County and developed three comprehensive clinics to serve impoverished neighborhoods in Buffalo.

In the meantime, he was studying the relatively new concept of HMOs. He eventually obtained a federal grant to start what became Univera Healthcare, a statewide \$1 billion-a-year health care and health insurance program with a staff of 2,900 and more than half a million members.

Now he's starting a new program at UB with the same kind of do-it-yourself idealism.

After discussing global health issues with public health students last year, Goshin, who has maintained adjunct faculty status in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine throughout his career as a health care executive, offered to lead an effort to promote and coordinate global health opportunities in the School

of Public Health and Health Professions. He recently sponsored three occupational therapy student placements in India and Africa through his Healthy World Foundation.

This fall, the school created the Office of Global Health Initiatives, which Goshin will head. He will not take a salary. He also has made a gift of \$100,000 to the school, primarily for fellowships for students in global health placements. It is the largest gift in the young school's history.

His connection to global health issues comes through organizations doing work in the field. He retired from Univera in 2003, and shortly afterward traveled to rural Haiti with a friend who was advising a Freedom from Hunger microfinance program there.

Goshin says he was immediately struck by the possibility of integrating health care with microfinance.

His interest led to membership on the Freedom from Hunger

board of trustees. He also started his own pilot health project in Uganda. He helped Freedom from Hunger obtain a \$6 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for a microfinance and health care project, and served as a senior adviser for the project in Benin, Burkina Faso, Philippines, Bolivia and India.

He started the Healthy World Foundation, which he self-funds, in 2006. The foundation partners with in-country organizations and is engaged in projects in Uganda and India ranging from clinics for the homeless, childhood malnutrition, projects serving children with disabilities and the frail elderly in rural villages, to a collaboration with Roswell Park Cancer Institute for oral cancer screening and a collaboration with the World Health Organization on a new malaria intervention.

This fall, one of the UB MPH students Goshin is funding is working in rural India. Goshin arranged this placement with



GOSHIN

an organization run by a man who was India's 2009 Social Entrepreneur of the Year.

Goshin's long-term vision is that SPHHP becomes a leader in global health learning, research and service engagement. He also sees the school as a potential nexus of global health collaborations across UB, SUNY and Western New York.

—Judson Mead



As part of her master's degree in nutrition science, UB graduate student Shuli Shechter is participating in the new Dietetic Internship Program at the UB Child Care Center. Shechter teaches kids about the importance of proper nutrition and healthy eating habits.

# Food for thought

## Internship program teaches kids proper eating habits

A new internship program that began this summer provides valuable supervised practice experience for students in the School of Public Health and Health Professions' Nutrition Program. What's more, the UB Child Care Center is reaping the benefits of this initiative.

The Dietetic Internship Program operated in conjunction with the center gives students the opportunity to apply skills they've acquired in the classroom to a real-world environment. Among other projects, they get to teach kids ages 5 and younger about healthy eating habits.

After just a few months, that collaboration has worked so well that UB Child Care Center Director Patricia Logan hopes to continue the internship indefinitely.

Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the UB Child Care Center opened on the South Campus in 1985. That location is licensed to accommodate 90 children. It has two rooms for infants, two for toddlers and three for preschoolers. The North Campus facility, which opened in 1998, is licensed for 120 children, with four infant rooms, three for toddlers and three for preschoolers. While the center isn't a specific department of the university, approximately 90 percent of those enrolled are children of UB faculty, staff and students.

The partnership was the idea of Jennifer Temple, assistant professor in SPHHP's Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences. "It's a great help. We're very excited about this collaboration," Logan says. "They're very independent. They come in prepared to jump right in," she says of the two interns the program has had thus far. The first dietetic intern, Katie Wixom, worked during the summer. Graduate student Shuli Shechter is the current intern.

During her summer internship, Wixom worked on a critical project for the center. She conducted an extensive review of the child care center's food program for infants, including a cost-comparison of homemade versus purchased baby food, and also developed a program for parents on child-feeding issues.

Among her many duties this semester, Shechter has crafted lesson plans for the kids to teach them about proper nutrition, especially healthy eating habits, such as not putting too much food on their plates. The healthy eating principles the kids learn are driven by MyPlate.gov, the U.S. Department of Agriculture-sponsored nutrition guidance program. "Education is our focus here," says Logan.



# Advancing a major women's health study

SPHHP plays vital role in landmark endeavor

Researchers at UB are spearheading a national women's health study that is likely to yield significant findings on chronic diseases in aging women, among other study results.

Called the Women's Health Initiative (WHI), the now 20-year-old study was launched by the National Institutes of Health to address three common causes of death—cardiovascular disease, cancer and osteoporosis—in women.



WACTAWSKI-WENDE

"It has opened up a tremendous amount of opportunity for research," says Jean Wactawski-Wende, professor and associate chair in SPHHP's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine. "The breadth of what we are able to study is really quite wide."

The initial WHI study began in 1991 and involved approximately 162,000 women nationally. UB plays a significant role in the continuation of the project through its standing as one of four regional WHI centers around the country. Buffalo manages the data collection among nine WHI affiliated research institutions in the mid-Atlantic region and the Northeast.

To date, WHI data has resulted in the publication of more than 600 papers, with more than 1,000 additional papers in progress. Much of that exciting and important work involves researchers within numerous units at UB, including the SPHHP.

UB researchers are working on studies involving osteoporosis and periodontal disease in women. Mike LaMonte, assistant professor in Social and Preventive Medicine, is preparing a national study in which researchers will conduct face-to-face interviews with WHI participants over 80 to learn more about healthy aging.

UB's advancement of the WHI has brought positive attention to the university and its commitment to research, while enabling students and younger faculty to work on a major study, says Wactawski-Wende.

"WHI is one of the largest and longest research studies ever conducted at this institution. It's generated more than \$30 million, directly or indirectly. It has brought a positive national spotlight on our university. The research to come out of this has been, in some cases, landmark studies and some of the most cited research on women's health," she adds.

—David J. Hill



Douglas Levere

Interns like Shechter also have to model what they teach the children. "They have to model good eating behavior," says Elizabeth Raleigh, the dietetic internship program director. "They have conversations about healthy eating. Eating is really all about behavior, so focusing on good eating behaviors, whether here or in the home, is really critical."



Kids also learn the importance of washing their hands before meals and brushing their teeth after eating.

The center uses a four-week menu cycle each month to ensure that kids get to try new and different foods. The food is supplied by UB's Campus Dining & Shops. "We do family-style eating, so they learn portion control and proper eating habits," says Shechter, who obtained her bachelor's degree in dietetics from SUNY Oneonta and is working toward a master's degree in nutrition science, while obtaining the required number of supervised practice hours to become a registered dietitian.

"Emphasizing family meals at home is critical for addressing the national obesity trend," Raleigh says. "We want to establish a good relationship with food from the start, a healthy, positive, pleasurable relationship with food, and I think that's something they really try to do here."

The children also learn the importance of washing their hands before each meal and brushing their teeth after eating. In addition, they often help out after meals by clearing their tables.

The dietetic internship works perfectly with the goals of both the UB Child Care Center and the SPHHP nutrition program. "This is great training for future dietitians," Raleigh says.

—David J. Hill

[Continued from Page 2]

Destino and Adam Bruck. At least a half-dozen students are scheduled to receive the minor in June 2012.

Christopher Andrews, the department's undergraduate director, says the minor was added to the department's offerings for several reasons, one of which was to keep up with the demand for statistics programs. Since being introduced as an AP exam in 1997, the AP statistics exam is now the ninth-most taken exam among high school students.

In addition, the statistics minor will serve as a natural lead-in to the department's graduate program. Moreover, Andrews explains, an undergraduate education in statistics broadens a student's opportunities in many career fields.

**Hutson named ASA Fellow**



HUTSON

Over the summer, Alan D. Hutson, professor and chair of the Department of Biostatistics, was elected a fellow of the American Statistical Association (ASA), the nation's pre-eminent professional statistical society.

Hutson was one of 58 fellows elected in recognition of their outstanding professional contributions to and leadership in the field of statistical science. Election is based on candidates' contributions to the advancement of statistics, including types and numbers of publications, positions held in the organizations in which they are employed, activities within the ASA, membership and accomplishments in other societies and other professional activities.

Hutson joined the UB faculty in 2002 as an associate professor and

chief of the Division of Biostatistics in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine (SPM), School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. He previously had worked at the University of Florida, where he served as an associate professor in the Department of Statistics, associate director of the Division of Biostatistics in the Department

of Statistics and director of the General Clinical Research Center Informatics Core, which at the time was responsible for the statistical components of 50-70 active clinical trial protocols yearly.

Hutson was named chair of the new Department of Biostatistics, which was created in 2003 after SPM moved from the medical school to

the new School of Public Health and Health Professions. As department chair, he initiated and has overseen creation of master's and doctoral degree programs in biostatistics.

Hutson also serves as associate editor of *Communication in Statistics and Journal of Surgical Oncology*, and as a technical reviewer for *Mathematical Reviews*.

**SPHP research update**

Researchers in the School of Public Health and Health Professions have been busy studying a range of public health issues, from air quality to intervention services for children with autism spectrum disorders.

**Lina Mu**, assistant professor in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, has been awarded a three-year, \$1.3 million grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences for a project related to human exposure to particulate matter that is based on a 2008 study in China.



MU

An air quality initiative in Beijing during the 2008 Summer Olympics created a unique natural experiment with an initial dramatic decline in air pollution concentrations followed by a return to pre-Olympic concentrations. Mu and her research team took advantage of this unique opportunity and designed a prospective cohort study in Beijing. The study enrolled participants prior to China's air quality improvement initiative in Beijing and followed these individuals over the course of the Olympics.

The study's aim, according to Mu, is to investigate the acute biological response to changes in human exposure to particulate matter and to better understand the critical pathways through which particulate matter operates in these diseases.

**Randy Carter**, professor and associate chair of the Department of Biostatistics, is co-principal investigator of a three-year, \$900,000 HRSA grant received by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to model a cost-effective approach to evaluating the impact of early intervention services on children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their families that can be used in

New York and nationally for program evaluation and quality improvement purposes.

This grant was made possible by collaborative development of the Statewide Early Childhood Outcomes Data System (ECODS) by the NYSDOH Early Intervention Program (EIP), the SPHP Population Health Observatory (PHO), of which Carter is director, and the Binghamton University Institute for Child Development.

The ECODS informatics system, soon to be housed and managed in the new UB Institute for Health Care Informatics, was funded by a six-year, \$1.8 million MOU between the NYSDOH and UB. Current and former PHO staff members have been instrumental in the development and operation of this system, including Amy Barczykowski, Jonathan Dare and Li Yan.

Carter and his students/staff in the Population Health Observatory will conduct research to achieve three of the HRSA grant's specific aims:

- To evaluate the accuracy of multiple assessments of the impact of EIP services on children with ASD and develop an index to measure this latent construct.
- To determine the impact of intervention services on the child, directly and indirectly through the impact on their family or through family perceptions of quality of services.
- And to test whether the total effect of EIP services on the impact on child index varies with race, ethnicity, or socio-economic/demographic status and, if so, to describe specific differences.



# 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](http://www.leavealegacy.org)

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**“Here parents have become de facto medical experts and had this really harrowing experience they’ve gotten through. So I could see how someone who’s been going through it for three years would love the idea of being able to help someone just starting out.”**

*Elizabeth Gage*



important differences in the actual things parents are doing by class,” Gage says.

Despite the hardships they had to endure, Gage says the study’s participants have been incredibly generous in allowing her a glimpse into such a difficult time. She says it’s partially because the participants are asked about things they don’t often get to vent about.

“We ask them, ‘How do you manage working during all of this?’ We talk a lot about finances, things that are probably major aspects of their experience that they don’t have an outlet within the medical community to really talk about,” she says.

The other reason is to help families enduring the same stress by sharing the knowledge they’ve gained in the hope that it will ease the pain of the experience. “It’s such a unique experience they’re going through, so there must be a certain amount of feeling a little isolated,” Gage says.

“Here parents have become de facto medical experts and had this really harrowing experience they’ve gotten through. So I could see how someone who’s been going through it for three years would love the idea of being able to help someone just starting out.”

While spending time with families of pediatric cancer patients might seem like an emotionally taxing endeavor, Gage

found it to be a rather surprising experience. “After I spent a lot of time with these families, it is the most positive, uplifting group of people you will ever be around,” she says. “When you’re dealing with pediatric cancer every day, you realize what a bad day really is.”

With the NIH grant expiring in May, Gage plans to apply for another round of funding to tackle the next phase of the study. “We found these different patterns in how families are interacting with health care and the big next logical question is, ‘Does it matter for health outcomes?’”

For example, upper-middle-class families talk frequently about a need to take an active role in their child’s health care, Gage says. She refers to them as “warrior advocates.” They seek second opinions and conduct sophisticated medical research on their own in an effort to form a collaborative relationship with physicians.

Gage’s research also has found that parents are increasingly turning to social networks of families battling pediatric cancer to share their experiences, especially in regards to getting children to take their medications at home, and as a coping resource.

Gage adds, “We know that income and education are associated with almost any health outcome. The big question within the public health community right now is,

‘Why is that?’ The main goal of this study is to elucidate some of those intervening mechanisms by examining if people from varied class backgrounds navigate health care differently. So now that we’ve shown that these parents do in fact interact with health care differently based on social class, the next step would be to see if that’s correlated with health outcomes.”

Her hope is that the research findings will inform guidelines for the services offered to patients in hospitals while also informing clinicians about the concerns and barriers experienced by patients from varied socioeconomic backgrounds.

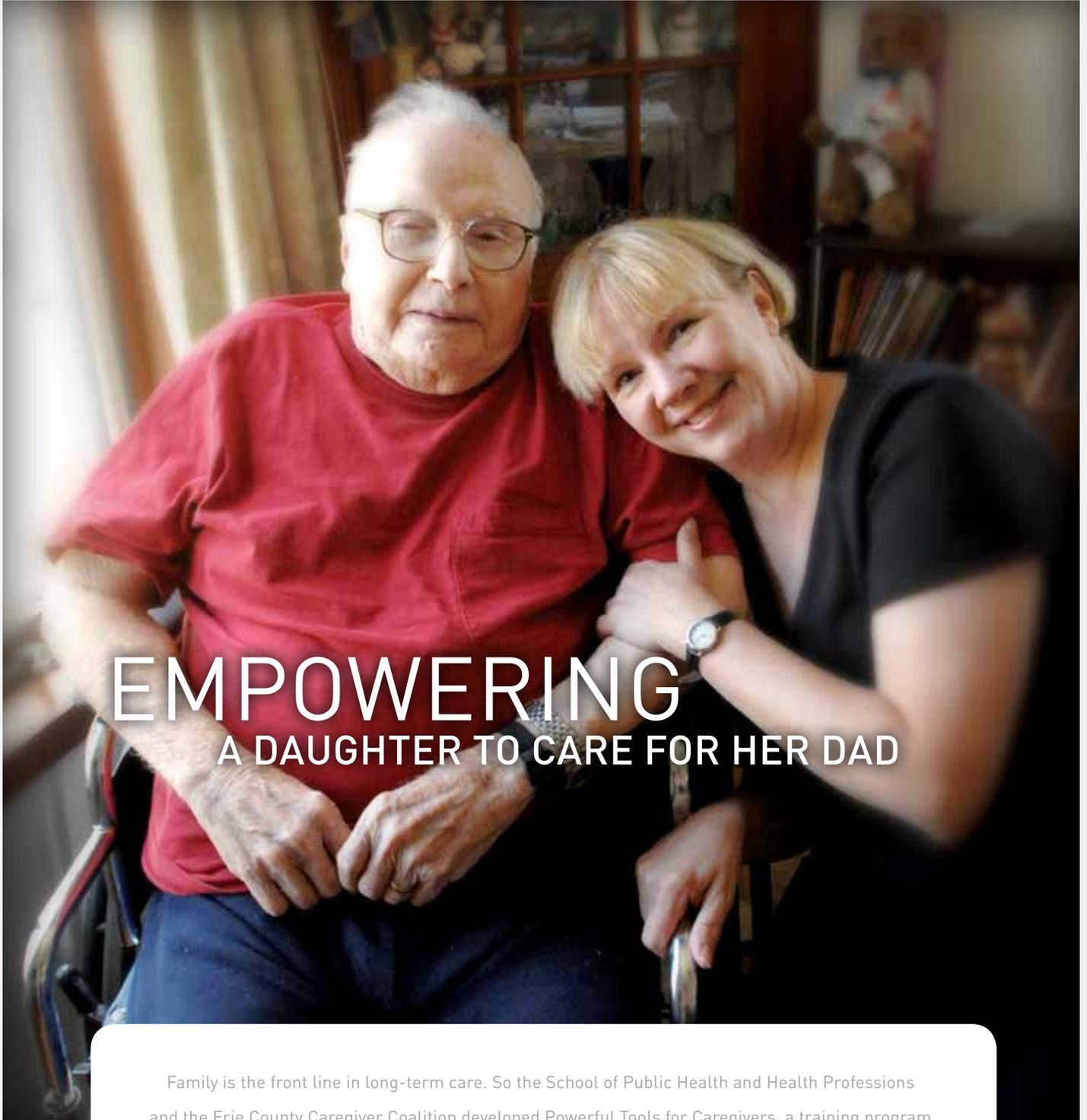
A native of Kenmore, Gage received her bachelor’s degrees in sociology and political science from College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., and received a master’s in sociology in 2005 from UB. She obtained her PhD in sociology, also from UB, in 2008.

She was among the recipients of the Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award in 2007.

Before joining the UB faculty, Gage completed a National Institutes of Health fellowship in epidemiology and cancer prevention at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

She also has served as a reviewer for numerous journals, including *Cancer* and the *American Journal of Public Health*.

—David J. Hill



# EMPOWERING

## A DAUGHTER TO CARE FOR HER DAD

Family is the front line in long-term care. So the School of Public Health and Health Professions and the Erie County Caregiver Coalition developed Powerful Tools for Caregivers, a training program for people providing informal care for the frail elderly or anyone with a disabling condition.

Theirs is the hard job. Our job is to help.

To see other ways the School of Public Health and Health Professions and UB reach the community, visit [www.buffalo.edu/reachingothers](http://www.buffalo.edu/reachingothers).

Improving health for populations and individuals

# impact

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 :

### Taking on the region's air polluters

nestled within the borders of the Town of Tonawanda is the largest concentration of regulated industrial facilities in New York State—more than 50, including a coke oven, a coal-fired power generating plant, petroleum storage tanks, manufacturing facilities for Dupont, Dunlop Tire, 3M and General Motors, and several chemical plants. For years, residents of communities bordering and downwind of this industrial corridor have complained not only about the potential health effects of the air pollution, but also the adverse impact on their quality of life resulting from the stench, respiratory problems, burning eyes and deposits of particulate matter in their yards and homes every time the wind carries the pollution in their direction.

Using a theory of change based on direct social action and community empowerment, the Clean Air Coalition of Western New York has successfully campaigned to reduce air pollution from the Tonawanda industrial corridor, with a particular focus on benzene emissions from the Tonawanda Coke Corp. Community members were mobilized through door-to-door canvassing, monthly community meetings and extensive media coverage of the campaign against Tonawanda Coke, and were shown how to effectively voice their concerns publicly, take air samples and

advocate on their own behalf in meetings with legislators and regulatory agencies.

The media coverage and community pressure paid off, resulting in a surprise raid on Tonawanda Coke by federal and state authorities in December 2009. As a result of information obtained during the raid, Tonawanda Coke and its environmental control manager faced prosecution and fines if changes were not made at the plant. On July 20, 2011, the company signed an agreement with the EPA that will reduce benzene emissions by two-thirds.

The Clean Air Coalition's efforts were also instrumental in the adoption of an E3 (Economy, Energy and Environment) initiative for the Town of Tonawanda. Co-sponsored by the EPA, the U.S. departments of Commerce, Interior and Labor, and the Small Business Administration, E3 will provide a framework and resources for six companies in Tonawanda to reduce emissions, not only protecting the community's health, but also jobs at these facilities. On the West Side of Buffalo, the Clean Air Coalition has begun organizing the community to reduce vehicle emissions that contribute to high asthma prevalence in those neighborhoods.

The School of Public Health and Health Professions has contributed to the growth of the Clean Air Coalition. As a faculty



SCHEIDER

Douglas Levere

member in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, I have consulted with the coalition on epidemiologic issues and assisted with organizational development as a member of the board of directors and am the current president of the board. Moreover, two MPH students from the school performed their field experiences with the Clean Air Coalition, and the potential exists for fruitful collaboration in the future.

*Bill Scheider is a research assistant professor of social and preventive medicine.*