First ‘Global Obesity Business Forum’ convenes at UNC-Chapel Hill
Senior executives from 14 major global food and beverage companies participate

The UNC School of Public Health’s North Carolina Institute for Public Health is collaborating with the University of the West Indies to create the Caribbean Health Leadership Institute—a five-year, $2 million initiative to enhance health leadership and management capacity in the Caribbean and fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region.

The rate of HIV infection in the Caribbean is the second highest in the world, after Africa, according to United Nations figures, with an estimated 230,000 people in the Caribbean living with the disease. An estimated 11,000 people in the Caribbean died of AIDS in 2007, and AIDS remains a leading cause of death among people ages 25 to 44.

The new Institute—funded by the Global AIDS Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—will use onsite and distance learning activities, individual assessment and coaching, team projects, and a competency-based curriculum to train public health leaders in ways to improve regional HIV/AIDS programs. The program is scheduled to launch on June 2, 2008, in Jamaica, when 25 participants from across the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean will begin their training.

The N.C. Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) is providing consultation and technical assistance to staff at the University of the West Indies to design, conduct and evaluate the new program. UWl staff spent several days in Chapel Hill, N.C., in December 2007, working on program design with staff from both NCIPH and the Center for Creative Leadership—a Greensboro, N.C.-based leadership development organization.

In February, three UWl staffers completed a week-long “train-the-trainer” program in Greensboro, titled “Leading Across Boundaries.” The session brought together individuals from Africa, India and the Caribbean who work in leadership development roles.

Dr. Brendan Bain will direct the new Institute. Bain is professor of community health at the UWl lead coordinator for the University’s HIV/AIDS Response Program and regional director of the Caribbean HIV/ AIDS Regional Training Network.

The University Cancer Research Fund: North Carolina Arms Researchers for the Battle
The first year of the UCRF is focused on recruiting faculty and staff, developing leading-edge programs and technology, funding innovative grants to fuel future programs and initiatives; and conducting listening sessions to learn the opinions of North Carolina citizens regarding ways that cancer screening, prevention and treatment can be improved in their communities.

Innovative Research in Labs, Clinics and Communities
Dr. Vangie Foshee, associate professor of health behavior and health education at the School of Public Health, received one of 18 Innovation Awards given through the UCRF. She received funding to conduct preliminary studies to determine if contextual factors (i.e., characteristics of the family, peer, school, and neighborhood environments) buffer or exaggerate the influences of genes on the development of adolescent tobacco and alcohol use. Her study will be conducted in two rural counties in North Carolina. Her proposal was one of more than 320 proposals from researchers in nearly 30 departments in the Schools of Public Health, Dentistry, Medicine and Pharmacy, and the College of Arts and Sciences. The team awarded $2 million for the Innovation Awards and $500,000 for eight Clinical Innovation Awards.

The Innovation Awards provide a “unique opportunity to support novel, imaginative pilot research projects,” says Dr. Rudy Juliano, professor of pharmacology and chair of the review committee for the awards. “Often such risky work would be difficult to fund by traditional grant mechanisms, but may have the highest potential impact on science, and ultimately on cancer care.” Juliano is principal investigator for the Carolina Center for Nanotechnology Excellence.

SAVE THE DATES!

Thursday, September 25th, 2008
6:30 p.m.
World of Difference Dinner
Honoring current members of The Rosenau Society and benefactors of professorships, scholarships, specialty endowments and facilities
Rosenau Society membership levels are:
Dean’s Circle $1,000 - $1,999
Chancellor’s Circle $2,000 - $4,999
President’s Circle $5,000 - $25,000
Gifts for 2007-2008 membership are due prior to June 30th, 2008.

Friday, September 26th, 2008
11:00 a.m.
Naming Ceremony and Celebration
(when we become the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health)
For more information about these events, please contact the Office of External Affairs at (919) 966-0198 or jerry_salak@unc.edu.

Established by the North Carolina General Assembly last July, the University Cancer Research Fund (UCRF) was created to accelerate the battle against cancer in North Carolina. Well into its first year, the UCRF is shaping a range of cancer initiatives at UNC, many of which will transfer to communities across North Carolina.

“Cancer control is a public health issue,” says UNC School of Public Health Dean Barbara K. Rimer, a member of the UCRF Governance Committee. “The University Cancer Research Fund is tangible evidence that our legislature is committed to invest substantial resources in preventing cancer, finding it early and treating it optimally. Researchers at the UNC School of Public Health are true partners in these initiatives. I’m also thrilled that some of the funds will go to support special projects committed to cancer control research.”

The fund—established to accelerate the battle against cancer at UNC-Chapel Hill’s School of Medicine and its Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center—received $25 million in 2007; $40 million in 2008; and is slated to receive $50 million per year beginning in 2009. A number of faculty at the UNC School of Public Health hold faculty appointments at the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and the UNC School of Medicine.

The event was chaired by Henry J. (Jack) Cardello, a former executive with Coca-Cola, RJR Nabisco, and General Mills, who serves as the forum’s industry executive director. Leading international nutrition scientists and medical experts convened at UNC-Chapel Hill for two days to discuss solutions to one of today’s most dangerous global health issues—obesity.

“A large number of countries, as well as most major global food companies, are grappling with ways to address this major global problem,” says Dr. Barry Popkin, director of IDOC and Distinguished Professor of Global Nutrition in the UNC School of Public Health and Medicine who specializes in studies of the dynamic shifts in diet, activity, and obesity occurring across the globe.

“Ways to create a common playing field to promote healthier diets include a vast array of regulatory, taxation and labeling approaches,” Popkin says. “We know that around the world, people prefer sweet, fatty and delicious foods and drinks. The question is how to make those foods generally healthy and how to reduce caloric intake to address the large increases in obesity and diabetes seen globally.”

The forum combined scholarly research related to obesity with corporate case studies and proposed roadmaps for action. Short presentations and in-depth group discussions were held on several key areas related to caloric and noncaloric sweeteners and fats. For more information on the forum, visit http://www.cpc.unc.edu/idoc/gobf.
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SCHOOL NEWS

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The Institute is scheduled to operate from June 2008 to September 2012.

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