Greetings from your new Health Behavior Alumni Section President!

I look forward to working with you over the next two years. Please allow me to introduce myself. I graduated with an MPH from Health Behavior in 2003 and on this 10 year anniversary of getting my degree it is my honor to volunteer for our department as your alumni chair. Twelve years ago I came to Carolina with an undergraduate degree in Human Biology from Stanford University. I currently work as a director at NC Prevention Partners, a Chapel Hill-based national nonprofit organization that guides businesses, hospitals and schools to develop a culture of wellness by improving policies and environments to address tobacco, nutrition and physical inactivity. I’m also proud to be a member of the Health Behavior adjunct faculty. Before joining Prevention Partners, I worked at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, Kaiser Permanente, and Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. Each job has given me a different perspective on the role and importance of prevention.

In both my work and volunteer experience, I have learned that healthcare and public health organizations of all kinds have different motivations and strengths that can be leveraged to create healthier communities. Finding the intersection in goals and developing strategic partnerships across the public and private sectors is essential to accelerating the pace of change. Collaboration is a key ingredient and our alumni network allows us to form new collaborations for greater impact. I’m looking forward to helping alumni explore new ways to connect and I welcome your ideas.

One of my goals for this year is to increase alumni engagement, including alumni who live both near and far. Staying in touch with classmates, faculty and staff -- and meeting new people -- can open doors for collaborations, friendships or new career directions. As we continue to weather a challenging economy, networking remains one of the most important investments we can make. I challenge you to think about how you can become more connected with the School of Public Health.

Mentoring student interns is a gratifying way for me to give back and to remain connected. I have mentored 15 student interns so far. Students greatly contribute to and extend my programs and I feel fortunate to learn from students. One recent Prevention Partners intern and current MPH student, Lindsay Tague, shared “the work I got to do in my internship translates to real skills that I am eager to take back to my second year of graduate school. I interacted with public health professionals from multiple sectors over the summer and have expanded my outlook on what it means to be a part of public health practice.”

How will you be more involved with Health Behavior this year? Will you attend Career Information Day in early 2014? Return to UNC to give a guest lecture? Mentor a student practicum or a capstone team? Reach out to a faculty member to share a research or collaboration opportunity? Attend a SPH 75th Anniversary celebration event? Make a contribution to our department? Volunteer to write articles for the HB alumni newsletter or website? Please share your ideas by emailing hbnewsletter@unc.edu or visiting one of the social media links on the back page.

I look forward to seeing you in the coming year. Here’s to a successful academic year!

Ingrid Morris, MPH

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We want to thank Ingrid for serving as our alumni representative and to congratulate her for receiving a School Health Champion Award from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction last year. She worked on a co-pilot to launch the Carrboro Elementary Wellness Team with Professor Kurt Ribisl.