

Greetings to all our readers — faculty, staff, students, alumni, our generous donors and many friends,

Welcome to the first issue of the new *Carolina Public Health*. It is the right time to celebrate the arrival of this new magazine. Never has public health been more important as we work together to confront challenges to the public's health across North Carolina and around the world. We live in a world in which two-thirds of Americans are now overweight or obese, where lack of fitness in American teens occurs twice as often as in apparently healthy adults, while 40 percent of the world's population lack clean water and 65 percent face starvation or sub-standard nutrition. As we saw after Hurricane Katrina, access to clean water is not only a problem of under-developed countries, although that itself would be reason for concern and action. More than ever before, public health is global public health, and you can read here about some of the exciting work our School is doing globally.

When many of us were trained in public health, it was common to say that infectious diseases were a scourge of the past while chronic diseases were the threat of the future. As AIDS progressed across populations, then across nations, and SARS, Avian flu and the next virus threaten our safety and our resources, we recognize that the world as we know it in public health has transformed, and so must the study and practice of public health itself. Being prepared for the future means confronting threats of natural and man-made disasters, facing threats of viruses and those of humans, and preventing chronic diseases while also assuring access to quality health care for all.

The UNC School of Public Health is leading critical research, teaching and service efforts in these important areas. Air, water, food, health are just a few of the words that characterize the work going on at the Carolina School of Public Health. Our faculty, staff, students and alumni are hard at work to determine how best to keep our air and water clean, protect us from health threats that we now know come from all over the world, improve the diets of children and adults, prevent cancer and cardiovascular diseases and so much more.

As you will read in the pages that follow, our work goes beyond describing and analyzing (important as those tools are) to developing effective interventions

to overcome health threats—across North Carolina and around the world. We don't stop there. We actively strive in public arenas as well as the private sector to assure that what is discovered in our classrooms, laboratories and communities becomes part of public health practice so that our knowledge makes a difference. And in much of what we do, we focus on overcoming the results of existing health disparities and in preventing new ones.

Our faculty, staff and students are pioneering new ways of teaching, learning, and earning public health degrees. Read about the first online DrPH program—pioneered at the UNC School of Public Health—and the remarkable students who were among the first to enroll.

Our mission is to advance the science of public health and turn knowledge into action and practice to improve the public's health across North Carolina and around the world—through teaching, research and service. In the pages that follow and the issues that follow, we will tell you about the people and programs that are part of the UNC School of Public Health's efforts to improve the public's health. As the top-rated public school of public health, we have a special mission and responsibility and a special trust. We work every day to earn that trust.

I am so very proud of this school and all we have accomplished. But there is so much more to do. To remain a top school of public health, we need your support. We need your financial support to remain the public health innovator, train tomorrow's leaders, turn knowledge into policy and practice and transform the lessons of practice into even better training. But we also need you to be mentors and partners. As part of that, we always welcome your feedback about how we are doing and how we could be even better. I look forward to working with you to develop opportunities for collaboration.

If I could, I would take you on a personal walking tour down our halls, into our labs and classrooms, and into the clinics, streets, shops and government corridors around the world where the impact of our work is being transformed into hope and health. In a very real sense, I want this magazine to be that tour.

Please join me.



DR. BARBARA K. RIMER