



Dr. Barbara K. Rimer

## The urgency of *now*

In this issue of *Carolina Public Health*, we focus on the urgency of *now*, the implementation imperative. Without good implementation, our discoveries are just trees falling in the woods, making no sound and having little impact.

It's not enough to discover. We also must implement...*well*. It takes far too long to move evidence from laboratories and research programs to clinics and communities where it will benefit people.

One of our responsibilities as a public university is not only to educate our state's children, but also to benefit the people of North Carolina. As this issue of our magazine demonstrates, many of the School's faculty members are translating research into practice and are committed not only to discover new knowledge but also to apply it. Because we are a global school, we want that benefit to be felt in North Carolina and around the world.

It's one thing to talk about implementation, but we must help people achieve it. Over the last few years, our gift from Dennis Gillings and Joan Gillings has enabled us to support visiting professors and an executive in residence. Don Holzworth, a successful, energetic entrepreneur and former chief executive officer of Constella Group LLC, has been a guru and guide for faculty members and students who want to translate their effective devices and programs into practice. Partly because of Don's help, we're giving birth to new companies, and more students and faculty members are interested in entrepreneurship.

Implementation is where we could achieve our greatest impact on the public's health. There are multiple examples of our faculty members' research being turned into effective programs and methods, influencing policies, and reducing health threats and hazards. Decreasing dating violence, increasing

availability of healthy foods in schools and other settings, realizing the vision of a cervical-cancer-free America, a better water filter, new statistical tools, graduated motor vehicle licensing, better ways of sharing water between jurisdictions, and the potential to improve women's health through evidence-based family guidelines are just a few of the areas in which we have made a difference.

Our North Carolina Institute for Public Health, under the leadership of associate dean for practice Anna Schenck, PhD, is accelerating practice and implementation of evidence-based public health.

We're influencing the field of implementation science by teaching it, providing critical services to other researchers, serving on prestigious editorial boards and encouraging the University to organize around it.

The speed and quality of implementation can be a matter of life and death, as statistics on maternal and child mortality numbers show. The implementation imperative is urgent if we are to achieve what Chancellor Holden Thorp defined in his 2008 acceptance speech ([tinyurl.com/thorp-acceptance](http://tinyurl.com/thorp-acceptance)) as the University's mission – to solve “the greatest problems of our time.” We're passionate about doing just that!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara K. Rimer".

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