

The public's health should not wait *for solutions*

The public's health is too important to be kept waiting. All around us:

- ▣ New diseases emerge and spread throughout the world at sonic speed; old nemeses sometimes re-emerge in stronger, more devastating forms.
- ▣ Natural disasters devastate countries and reverberate around the world, challenging us to clarify our preparedness plans and training.
- ▣ Evidence-based interventions that could save lives too often remain out of the reach of many people who could benefit from them.

That's why our researchers – faculty and staff members, students and alumni – won't wait, either. Public health problems in North Carolina and around the world need effective solutions *now*.

At UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, we understand the greatest challenges to health throughout the world. We move closer and faster every day to translating research into practice, where our findings can do the most good. The key is *anticipating*

threats and *accelerating* solutions with practical answers. Now, more than ever, time is of the essence.



Dr. Michael Kosorok

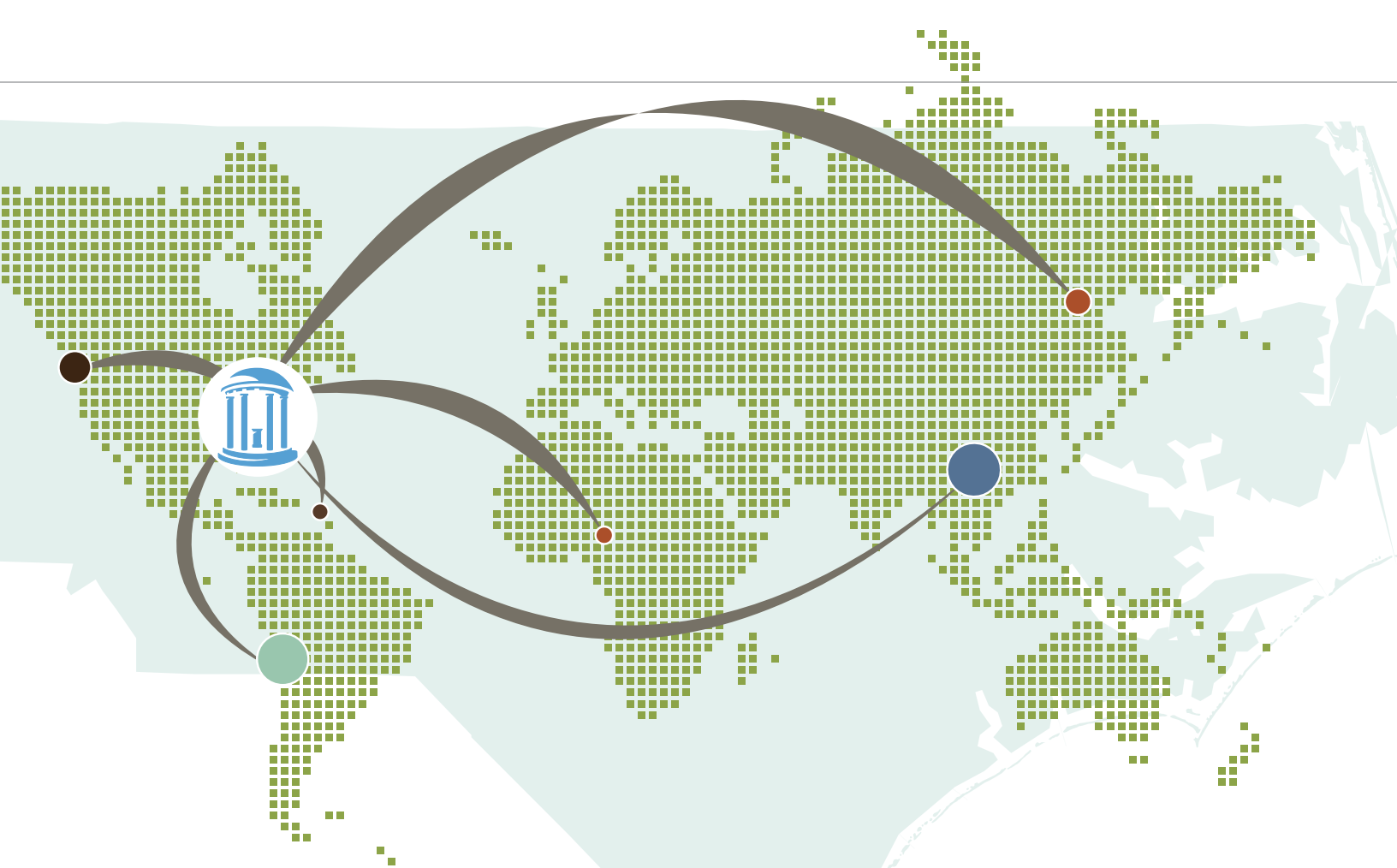
“We are undergoing an unprecedented increase in the rate of new technology and new information. If we are not fast enough in

solving public health problems and implementing solutions, we run the risk of becoming outdated and irrelevant before we have accomplished anything,” says Michael Kosorok, PhD, professor and chair of the School's Department of Biostatistics. “On the other hand, if we cut too many corners in the process, we run the risk of obtaining misleading results that can harm the public and delay progress. Striking the right balance is one of the great challenges of contemporary public health research.”

Rapid and *reliable* – both are important when seeking answers to complicated, menacing public health questions. Such problems demand complex and collaborative solutions. Given the School's size – and the depth and breadth of its research – we are well positioned to make a difference on many levels, here at home and around the world.

For example:

- ▣ A team reaches out across North Carolina to caregivers for the elderly, teaching them ways to distinguish between symptoms typical of aging and true signs of dementia, and helping them find support for their loved ones and for themselves (see page 17).



- Researchers develop better ways for medical and emergency workers to recognize symptoms of stroke and start treatment immediately to minimize damage (see page 6).
- A partnership across the UNC campus – and across the globe – potentially could save hundreds of thousands of lives by bringing clean water to more than 250,000 people who didn’t have it before (see page 28).
- A professor works with a North Carolina company to prevent tick-borne diseases in the state’s woodlands – and also discovers answers to insect threats in Africa (see page 14).
- UNC researchers working in South Africa discover that keeping girls in school is the girls’ best defense against contracting HIV (see page 8).



Dr. Herbert Peterson

“We now have an unprecedented window of opportunity to make bold progress in preventing deaths to mothers and their newborns

globally, and we need to make the most of it,” says Herbert Peterson, MD, Kenan Distinguished Professor and chair of the maternal and child health department. While he is encouraged by progress – maternal deaths have dropped by a third worldwide since 1990 – it’s still not enough. Every 90 seconds, he says, a woman dies from complications of pregnancy or childbirth somewhere in the world.

“We’ll work closely with our partners to develop innovative approaches for translating our best science into better outcomes,” he says. “Strong collaborations are being formed

to seize this moment, and together, we have a wonderful chance to make a difference.”

Students are an integral part of realizing these solutions, especially during the summers, when they scatter around the world to put their studies into action. Alumni bring new solutions to problems they encounter in practice. Faculty members and other researchers discover causes and effective solutions.

We won’t keep the public waiting. There’s too much at stake.

– Ramona DuBose

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– Michael Kosorok, PhD