

# UNC GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH SCHOOL NEWS

MARCH — SEPTEMBER 2010

For more information on these topics and other news, please see [www.sph.unc.edu/news\\_events](http://www.sph.unc.edu/news_events).

## School sponsors oil spill forum

ALTHOUGH APRIL'S BP OIL SPILL in the Gulf of Mexico did not affect the North Carolina coast, it provided opportunity to evaluate local, state and federal readiness. More than 130 participants at the School's July 29 "One Health" forum interacted with state and federal partners who described how to train and use volunteers and identified areas requiring additional planning. Bill Gentry, director of health policy and management certificate programs, arranged and led the forum. Read more at [www.sph.unc.edu/oilspill](http://www.sph.unc.edu/oilspill).

## Foshee receives award to study prevention of dating violence

VANGIE A. FOSHEE, PHD, professor of health behavior and health education, has received a grant of nearly \$1.2 million from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to evaluate a program aiming to prevent psychological, physical and sexual dating abuse by adolescents who have been exposed to domestic violence.

"Moms and Teens for Safe Dates" was developed by Foshee and health behavior and health education colleagues, Professor Susan Ennett, PhD, and Beth Moracco, PhD, and James Michael Bowling, PhD, both research

associate professors, with funding from the National Institute of Justice. Mothers who have left an abusive partner obtain prevention information through the program and participate in interactive activities with their 12- to 15-year-old adolescents who were exposed to the abuse. Adolescents exposed to domestic violence are at increased risk for being abused by and abusing the people they date.



Dr. Vangie Foshee

## Ricketts named to national Health Care Workforce Commission

THOMAS RICKETTS, PHD, professor of health policy and management, is one of 15 national experts appointed to the new National Health Care Workforce Commission. The Commission is an independent body that advises Congress and the administration on health workforce policy.

"This commission gives us the opportunity to develop new ways to modernize our workforce to meet the challenges of increasing access and quality of health care while we control costs," Ricketts said. "We need to examine how we prepare and deploy our doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists and the many other health care practitioners to meet the nation's future health care needs. In many ways, we have been trying to run a system for the 21st century with 20th century approaches."

Ricketts also serves as deputy director for policy analysis at UNC's Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research and is co-director of American College of Surgeons Health Policy Research Institute. He is a Gillings Visiting Professor with Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sante Publique in France.



Dr. Thomas Ricketts

## School reaccredited by CEPH for maximum period, seven years

THE UNC GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH was reaccredited in June by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) for seven years, the maximum period of renewal.

Leading the school's accreditation team were Peggy Leatt, PhD, associate dean for academic affairs and chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management; Anita Farel, DrPH, associate chair for graduate studies in the Department of Maternal and Child Health; Laurel Files, PhD, associate chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management; Felicia Mebane, PhD, assistant dean for students; and Dave Potenziani, PhD, former senior associate dean.

## Water Institute at UNC launched in October

THE WATER INSTITUTE AT UNC (<http://waterinstitute.unc.edu>), housed in UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, was launched Oct. 25 during UNC's conference, "Water and Health: Where Science Meets Policy." The conference, co-sponsored by the new institute and the UNC Institute



Dr. Jamie Bartram

for the Environment, attracted more than 350 attendees. Experts from more than 50 countries provided a wide range of perspectives on drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and water resources.

UNC has longstanding expertise in the areas of water, policy and health, with many faculty members engaged in associated research and recognized as international leaders. The Water Institute was established by the School to leverage this broad, interdisciplinary experience.

"The Water Institute at UNC brings together individuals and institutions from diverse disciplines and empowers them to work together to tackle critical global issues in water and health," says Jamie Bartram, PhD, Institute director and professor of environmental sciences and engineering.



Dr. Rebecca Fry

## ESE's Fry honored as 'outstanding young researcher'

REBECCA FRY, PHD, assistant professor of environmental sciences and engineering, has received two prestigious awards recognizing her potential to make substantial contributions throughout her career. The honors include the Outstanding New Environmental Scientist (ONES) Award, presented by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), and selection as a PopTech Science and Public Leadership Fellow. Fry's ONES award includes a \$2.2 million grant to study health effects of prenatal arsenic exposure in newborns in Gomez Palacio, Mexico.

PopTech, a global community of interdisciplinary leaders, each year selects young scientists who work in critical public health areas and provides them with advanced leadership and communications training. Fry also has received support from the University Cancer Research Fund and a Gillings Innovation Lab (see page 28).

## Maternal and Child Health offers online degree

THE SCHOOL'S maternal and child health department will offer an online master's degree program in spring 2011 to complement its established residential training programs. The degree will increase working professionals' access to graduate education focused on improving the health of women, children and families.

Developed with support from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration's Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, the new curriculum builds upon an online certificate (MCH Ole!) introduced earlier this year.

## Munroe-Blum speaks at University Day event



Dr. Munroe-Blum

HEATHER MUNROE-BLUM, PHD, principal and vice-chancellor of McGill University in Montreal, gave the keynote address at UNC's University Day celebration Oct. 12. The text of the presentation is

available at <http://tinyurl.com/munroe-blum>. Munroe-Blum received a doctorate with distinction in epidemiology from UNC in 1983.



Dr. Melissa Troester (left), Dr. Liza Makowski

PHOTO BY DIANNE SHAW

## Researchers to study pregnancy, obesity, breast cancer disparities

TWO SCHOOL RESEARCHERS received a five-year, \$2.2 million grant to study how pregnancy and obesity may promote susceptibility to an aggressive subtype of breast cancer more prevalent in young, African-American women.

Melissa Troester, PhD, assistant professor of epidemiology, and Liza Makowski, PhD, assistant professor of nutrition, are principal investigators for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences' Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Program.

## Browning, Vinroot elected to UNC Board of Visitors

KELLY B. BROWNING, member and former president of the School's Public Health Foundation board, and alumnus Richard Vinroot Jr., MD, MPH, will serve four-year terms on the 160-member UNC Board of Visitors, which assists the Chancellor and trustees in activities that help advance the University.



Kelly Browning



Dr. Rich Vinroot Jr.

## UNC study helps explain why black patients with lung cancer have surgery less often than whites

A NEW UNC STUDY that follows patients with lung cancer is one of the first to suggest why patients choose not to have life-preserving lung surgery and why such surgery is sought less often by blacks.

Samuel Cykert, MD, associate professor in the UNC School of Medicine, is lead author of the American Cancer Society-funded study, published in the June 16 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Study authors from UNC Gillings School

of Global Public Health include Peggye Dilworth-Anderson, PhD, professor of health policy and management, and Lloyd J. Edwards, PhD, associate professor of biostatistics.

Cykert says explanations for differences in surgical rates for blacks may include black patients' perception of poor doctor-patient communication. Black patients also were less likely to have primary care providers who could help them reconsider a decision about surgery.

## Nutrition's Stevens coordinates national study of ways to prevent, treat childhood obesity

UNC-CHAPEL HILL HAS BEEN NAMED coordinating center for a National Institutes of Health-funded study to examine ways to curtail the nation's childhood obesity epidemic.

June Stevens, PhD, AICR/ WCRF Distinguished Professor of nutrition and epidemiology and chair of the nutrition department, is principal investigator for the center.



Dr. June Stevens

The NIH's \$49.5 million Childhood Obesity Prevention and Treatment Research (COPTR) program is among the first long-term obesity prevention and treatment research studies in children. COPTR will test methods for preventing excessive weight gain in non-overweight and moderately overweight youth, and methods for reducing weight in obese and severely obese youth.

Stevens also was a featured speaker at the 2010 American Institute of Cancer Research (AICR) Conference on Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer, Oct. 21-22, in Washington, D.C.

## Physicians can improve children's oral health

SCHOOL RESEARCHERS HAVE provided the first national data on the effectiveness of dental referrals by physicians.

Heather Beil, MPH, doctoral student, and Gary Rozier, DDS, MPH, professor, both in the School's Department of Health Policy and Management, co-authored the study, published in the August issue of the journal *Pediatrics*.



Dr. Gary Rozier

Researchers sampled children to determine whether a medical health care provider had recommended that a child be seen by a dentist and whether the child actually had a dental visit. The most significant finding was in the group of two- to five-year-olds. Of the 47 percent of the group advised to have a dental check-up, 39 percent did.

## Coming soon!

**Feb. 18** – Lecture by Isabel Wilkerson, author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*

**Feb. 24** – Minority Student Caucus Alumni Reception

**Feb. 25** – Minority Health Conference

([www.minority.unc.edu](http://www.minority.unc.edu))

**March 31** – Foard Lecture

([www.sph.unc.edu/foard](http://www.sph.unc.edu/foard))

Speaker: Richard A. Vinroot Jr., MD, MPH

For more information about these and other events, contact Jerry Salak at (919) 843-0661 or [jerry.salak@unc.edu](mailto:jerry.salak@unc.edu).