

UNC GILLINGS SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH SCHOOL NEWS

OCTOBER 2010 – MARCH 2011

For more information on these topics and other news, please see www.sph.unc.edu/news_events.

Faculty members, alumna appointed to national advisory groups

NUTRITION PROFESSOR ELIZABETH MAYER-DAVIS, PHD, was appointed by President Obama to the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion and Integrative and Public Health. Sharon Van Horn, MD, MPH,



Dr. Elizabeth Mayer-Davis

an alumna of the School's epidemiology department, also was appointed. Group members will develop policy recommendations and advise the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council on lifestyle-based chronic disease prevention, integrative health care practices, and health promotion.



Dr. Thomas Ricketts

Thomas Ricketts, PhD, professor of health policy and management and Gillings Visiting Professor, was 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.



Dr. Steven Meshnick

Meshnick awarded Gates Foundation grant

STEVEN MESHNICK, MD, PHD, epidemiology professor, has received a Grand Challenges Explorations Grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The \$100,000 award will support an innovative global health research project titled, "Development and Evaluation of the Synthetic Lymph Node." Meshnick will collaborate with co-principal investigator Carla Hand, MD, PhD, epidemiology research assistant professor, to try to improve vaccine efficacy.

Infants perceived as 'fussy' are more likely to receive solid foods too early

A STUDY LED BY HEATHER WASSER, MPH, RD, nutrition doctoral candidate, offers reasons why some mothers feed their infants complementary foods (juice, solids) before the infants are four months old, including the mothers' perception that the infants are "fussy" and would be soothed by the introduction of complementary food. Infants perceived

to be fussy were nearly twice as likely to be fed solid food before age 4 months. Obese mothers were even likelier to feed their young infants solid foods.

The study was published online Jan. 10, 2011, in the journal *Pediatrics*.



Heather Wasser



Dr. Anna Maria Siega-Riz

Siega-Riz named associate dean

ANNA MARIA SIEGA-RIZ, PHD, professor of nutrition and of epidemiology, was named the School's new associate dean for academic affairs, effective Dec. 1, 2010. Siega-Riz succeeds Peggy Leatt, PhD.

A UNC nutrition alumna, Siega-Riz has been a member of the UNC public health faculty since 1995. She served on three National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine committees, which were charged to provide guidance about the federal Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, determine guidelines for weight gain during pregnancy, and set standards for systematic reviews used in clinical guidelines.

UNC epidemiologists participate in oil spill health study

A NEW FEDERAL STUDY will look at possible health effects of the Gulf of Mexico's Deepwater Horizon oil spill upon 55,000 cleanup workers and volunteers across the United States, particularly in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Epidemiology faculty members are working with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) on the study, expected to last up to 10 years.

The Gulf Long-term Follow-up Study, the largest health study of its kind ever conducted among cleanup workers and volunteers, is

one component of a comprehensive federal response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Many agencies, researchers and community members have provided input as to how the study should be conducted.

Dale Sandler, PhD, chief of the NIEHS epidemiology branch and adjunct professor of epidemiology at the School, is principal investigator. Other researchers include Lawrence Engel, PhD, associate professor of epidemiology and associate scientist in NIEHS's epidemiology branch, and Richard Kwok, PhD, a three-time alumnus of the School's epidemiology department (BSPH '97, MSPH '99, PhD '03).



Dr. Dale Sandler



Dr. Lawrence Engel



Dr. Richard Kwok

Save these dates in 2012!

Feb. 24 – Minority Health Conference
April 17 – Foard Lecture

Schenck leads NC Institute for Public Health



Dr. Anna Schenck

ANNA P. SCHENCK, PHD, became director of the N.C. Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) and associate dean for public health practice at the School, effective March 1, 2011. Schenck also leads the School's Public Health Leadership Program (PHLP). She succeeds Edward Baker Jr., MD, MPH, research professor of health policy and management.

"Anna's leadership provides an important opportunity to strengthen ties between research, teaching and practice at the School," says Dean Barbara K. Rimer. "By leading the NCIPH and PHLP, she will increase connections between academics and practice, not just with these programs but across the School and out to communities across North Carolina."

School leads development of America's Health Rankings

ANNA SCHENCK, PHD, associate dean for public health practice, leads the scientific advisory committee for United Healthcare Foundation's (UHF) rankings of health by state. The state rankings, used by policymakers and others to assess the need for health care improvements in various areas of the country, have been compiled annually since 2002. UHF, in concert with the American Public Health Association and Partnership for Prevention, commissioned UNC's public health school to undertake an ongoing review of America's Health Rankings.

In addition to Schenck, other members of the 22-member panel include Jamie

Bartram, PhD, professor of environmental sciences and engineering and director of The Water Institute at UNC, part of the Gillings School of Global Public Health; Leah Devlin, DDS, MPH, and Sheila Leatherman, MSW, both Gillings Visiting Professors (GVP) in health policy and management at the School; Thomas C. Ricketts, PhD, GVP and professor of health policy and management and social medicine; and Barbara K. Rimer, DrPH, dean and Alumni Distinguished Professor of health behavior and health education at the public health school. Ricketts previously led the committee for eight years.

UNC's 32nd annual Minority Health Conference addresses the promise of health equity

ABOUT 500 PEOPLE attended the 32nd annual Minority Health Conference in Chapel Hill on Feb. 25, 2011, and at least 700 more participated through remote technologies and sites in Ghana, Canada, Japan and multiple locations in the U.S.

The conference's William T. Small Jr. Keynote Lecture was presented by Bonnie M. Duran,



Dr. Bonnie Duran



Kristin Black and Paul Gilbert, event co-chairs

DrPH, associate professor of health services at the University of Washington-Seattle. Duran spoke about "The Promise of Health Equity: Advancing the Discussion to Eliminate Disparities in the 21st Century."