



Fall 2011 Alumni Newsletter

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“My experiences in the Community Health Sciences program (MPH 1995) at UCLA SPH were transformational; starting with the first quarter in Dr. Li’s foundations of Community Health/Theory class, I realized that I had found my career path. The experiences and knowledge I assimilated during my time in the MPH program in CHS put me on a career trajectory that has been most rewarding and exciting. I’m currently faculty in the UC Irvine Program in Public Health, building the Social and Behavioral Sciences component of our nascent Public Health Program. Thank you, CHS, for the opportunity to find such a rewarding career!”

*Cynthia Lakon, Ph.D., MPH
Class of 2005*

Welcome from the CHS Chair

By Steven P. Wallace

It is an honor to take over as Chair of the Department of Community Health Sciences (CHS) from Martin Iguchi, who recently took the position of Dean at the School of Nursing and Health Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. For those alumni who never took a course with me, let me briefly introduce myself. I was trained as a medical sociologist and came to UCLA in 1990 to build up the coursework and research on older adults. I have done that and currently co-direct the coordinating center for the National Institute of Aging’s Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research. I have an active research program that looks at equity and access in health and long-term care for the elderly, and the impact of public policy on the health and well-being of older adults. I also have an ongoing interest in immigrant health, with a number of publications in that area. Most of my research is conducted through the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and you can see a listing of many of my publications and policy briefs at



Dr. Steven P. Wallace, Chair

www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/SearchResults.aspx?keywords=wallace. I also have projects that provide community capacity development in using research data for policy advocacy a development, which most recently has included a focus on environmental health issues in two immigrant communities, see www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/ProgramDetails.aspx?id=3. Oh yes, and I still ride my bicycle from Culver City to campus every day.

In my 20 years as a faculty member in CHS at UCLA I have been inspired by the many accomplishments of our graduates. Several of our alumni have been inducted into the School of Public Health’s Alumni Hall of Fame, see www.ph.ucla.edu/chs/alumni.htm. One of my objectives as departmental chair is to provide more opportunities for alumni to stay connected with the cutting edge work of our faculty and alumni, and to be able to help shape the future of public health through our educational and research activities.

This newsletter is one small step in that direction. I ask that you help by keeping us up to date with information that we can share about how you are helping promote the public’s health, offering suggestions for how we could help you, and letting us know how you could help us. For example, are there social networking tools we should set up to facilitate contact between alumni, students, and faculty? Events, lectures, or other opportunities for face to face meetings you would attend? Would you be willing to mentor a current student in your area? Or something else? Let us know, we’d love to hear from you. Please send updates and related information to the CHS student affairs officer, Alexis Sexauer at chsalumni@ph.ucla.edu

Welcome to our Newest Alumni

Masters

66 Masters Students Graduated

- 2 MSPH graduates
- 3 MPH-Dietetic Internship graduates
- 61 MPH graduates

41% graduated with jobs, internships, fellowships, or acceptance to another degree program



Doctoral

Jeff Dang, Ph.D.

Martin Y. Iguchi, *Chair*

A latent transition analysis of self-efficacy among men treated for cocaine dependence

Vilma Enriquez-Haas, Ph.D.

Steven P. Wallace, *Chair*

Access and Utilization of Health Services Among Latino Immigrant Male Day Laborers in the US.

Loan Pham Kim, Ph.D.

Gail G. Harrison, *Chair*

Assessing the Socio-Cultural Landscape of Overweight among Latino Families in LA County: Issues of Perception, Acculturation & the Influence of WIC

Angie Denisse Otiniano, Ph.D.

Gilbert C. Gee, *Chair*

Discrimination, Drugs, and Alcohol among Latina/os in the United States

Reflections from a recent graduate

By Teresa Dicolon, MPH

Class of 2011

Congratulations to the Class of 2011! It still seems like yesterday that I was dealing with the back-to-school jitters, amplified by the disorienting labyrinth of the School of Public Health's corridors. After working as a case manager for only one year following my undergraduate career, I was intimidated knowing that others in my cohort would likely be older and more experienced than me. Fortunately, approachable professors, friendly classmates, student group opportunities, and ample social events eased me into the first quarter of my MPH program.

UCLA was a great fit for me, as I could experience a wide breadth of public health areas. I also appreciated the diversity among the student body and faculty. My courses challenged me and increased my confidence in my ability to be a public health professional. My involvement with student groups like RHIG, SCPH, and PHSA further built my skills in program planning, event coordination, advocacy, and networking. Most notably, it would not have been a CHS experience without 211. Who could forget the endless meetings, grueling editing sessions, and the exasperation of realizing your objectives cannot be evaluated? While this course certainly was a source of frustration, it was also a source of immense learning. I felt an incredible sense of achievement with every graded assignment Group 9 received, and our work provided a strong foundation for my future career.

In my time as a student, I not only benefited academically, but socially. I met unbelievable friends through my classes and involvement with student groups. Most importantly, I had so much fun, from Happy Hour at Barney's, to road tripping to conferences, to celebrating the end of the school year at the PHSA banquets. I cannot believe that two years passed by so quickly, but I constantly look back on the valuable experiences I had in my time at UCLA with happiness and gratitude.

After taking some time after graduation to travel, I moved to Boston, Massachusetts. Although currently unemployed, I am eager to take advantage of the plethora of public health organizations existing in the area. With MPH in hand [well, when it arrives in November], I hope to intersect my two main areas of interest: reproductive health and nutrition. I want to employ my program planning and health education skills but also incorporate health policy and advocacy into my work. My dream position at this point in time would be working as a Project Coordinator for a local public health agency. In the future, I aspire to be an Executive Director of a non-profit organization. Of course, I am always open to new and exciting opportunities outside my comfort zone, so we will see what comes my way.

This year's commencement speaker, Dr. Mitchell Katz, charged us with one simple thing: change the world. Although a weighty directive, I believe that we, the alumni from the School of Public Health at UCLA, have the competence and perseverance to carry it out. I wish you all the best in your current and future endeavors, and GO BRUINS!

Alumni Spotlight

Noemi V. Rudolph (formerly Noemi Villafranca) graduated from the UCLA School of Public Health with an MPH in Community Health Sciences in 1995. Upon graduation, she joined the Health Care Financing Administration (now called the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services – CMS) in Baltimore, Maryland as a Presidential Management Intern. During the two-year internship program, Noemi worked in several areas of HCFA and in the United States House of Representatives Ways and Means Health Subcommittee. In 1997, Noemi became a permanent employee of HCFA as a social science research analyst and through the years managed evaluation contracts focusing on the Medicare and Medicaid dual eligible population, the Medicare prescription drug card, the Medicare prescription drug benefit, and the Medicare Advantage (managed care) programs. In addition to managing evaluation contracts, Noemi conducted her own research projects using the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey examining issues of Medicare beneficiary knowledge that resulted in article publications in Medical Care, Health Care Financing Review, and Inquiry.



Noemi is currently the director of the Division of Research on Health Plans and Drugs in the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation at CMS. The portfolio of her division includes research and evaluation projects on prescription drugs, managed care, end-stage renal disease, and prevention and expanding with the passage of the Affordable Care Act. She is convinced that the education she received at the UCLA SPH adequately prepared her for a career in the federal government. She utilizes the concepts in process and impact evaluations, health services, and biostatistics in her day-to-day work. She has also often referred to the Diffusion of Innovation theory and the Health Belief Model in her research work. She is forever grateful to the professors and fellow students for a wonderful educational experience at UCLA and the lifetime friendships that developed along the way.

Connect with Noemi by emailing her at
Noemi.Rudolph@cms.hhs.gov

Career Development Tips

No matter how long since you received your degree, career development is always important. This month the School of Public Health Career Development Office is offering tips for receiving the best salary offer for the jobs you want.

Unlike many tip listings, which allow you to pick and choose the “mix” of recommendations that work for you, these suggestions should all be adopted with the “intensity” you choose.

- Perform diligent compensation research (perform a thorough Internet search of websites that publish compensation ranges for similar jobs, including the geographical differences in pay scales)
- Resist vocalizing your “salary requirement” number.
- Be honest about former compensation. After avoiding answering salary questions and being forced to divulge your current compensation, be totally honest.
- Politely reject the initial offer. After telling the employer how flattered and pleased you are to receive their offer.

- Politely request their consideration of a 10 percent higher figure.
- When convinced you’ve received the maximum dollar offer, negotiate improved benefits.

For more tips and future information please visit the
[Career Development website](#).

Don’t forget that SPH Alumni have continuous access to the School of Public Health [JOB BANK](#).

If you need a username and password email
 Arlecia Powell-Halley at aphalley@ph.ucla.edu

Additional Public Health Career Resources can be found at the
[School of Public Health website](#)

News from CHS Faculty

DR. CAROL ANESHENSEL:

Dr. Carol Aneshensel specializes in the areas of sociology of mental health and medical sociology. Her research concerns the ways in which the organization of society influences the mental health of its members. It emphasizes how social inequality becomes mental health disparities, focusing on gender, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and age. Her research spans the life course from adolescence through old age. Dr. Aneshensel usually works with large survey samples and complex multivariate statistical analysis of longitudinal data. Her most recent work deals with how the socioeconomic stratification and racial/ethnic segregation of neighborhoods affects the health of persons in late middle age and old age, especially depression, cognitive functioning, and mortality.



DR. LINDA BOURQUE:

Under the direction of Professor Linda Bourque, professor of community health sciences in the UCLA School of Public Health, and with the collaboration of former and current doctoral students Megumi Kano, Michele Wood, Rotrease Regan, and Melissa Kelley, the National Survey of Disaster Experiences and Preparedness conducted telephone interviews with residents of 3,300 households in the continental United States between April 2007 and February 2008. Areas that experienced 9/11 (New York City and Washington, D.C.) or were threatened by 9/11 (Los Angeles County) were over sampled to allow appropriate comparisons to be made between "high visibility" areas and the rest of the United States. Results from the study, [Communicating Actionable Risk for Terrorism and Other Hazards](#), have been published in *Environment and Behavior*, *Risk Analysis* and the *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*.



DR. CHANDRA FORD:

In Winter Quarter 2011, the first cohort of students graduated from a new course entitled "*Health Disparities, Healthy Equity and Sexual Minority Populations*", which may be the first permanent course in the UCLA SPH to focus on the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations. The course, which was developed and taught by Dr. Chandra Ford, responds to growing interests among students in LGBT health. A recent [Institute of Medicine Report](#) identifies LGBT health as an area that requires greater attention. Several schools of public health already offer graduate certificates or training in LGBT health including the University of Pittsburgh, Drexel University and Columbia University. Because Los Angeles has a large LGBT population, the new course and any others that might be offered are important for helping our graduates develop the skills needed for practice and research with LGBT populations.



DR. MARJORIE KAGAWA-SINGER:

Dr. Kagawa-Singer's research focuses on the etiology and elimination of disparities in physical and mental health care outcomes for communities of color, primarily with the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and the cross-cultural validity of health behavior theories and measures utilizing Community Based Participatory Research strategies. She is also Regional principal investigator in Los Angeles for the NCI funded national [Asian American Network on Cancer Awareness, Research and Training \(AANCART\)](#), and the UCLA NCI funded Minority Training Program for Cancer Control Research. She recently was awarded an R01 grant on quality of life and survivorship for Asian American Cancer Survivors, and second grant through the NIH-OBSSR on Operationalizing Culture. Dr. Kagawa-Singer is a member of the National American Cancer Society Board, the UCLA School of Public Health Center for Health Policy Research, the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, and the UC-wide Multi-campus Research Program: AAPI Policy Initiative, and is Chief Editor of the journal, *AAPI NEXUS: Asian American and Pacific Islanders Policy, Practice and Community*.



DR. DONALD MORISKY:

This past summer of 2011, Dr. Donald Morisky conducted HIV/AIDS prevention research and mentored the dry lab's medical faculty at the China Medical University in Taichung, Taiwan has had a National Health Insurance Program since 1996 and 99% of residents are enrolled. A data base of the "one-million population" is an excellent source for epidemiological studies and assessment of technological and organizational changes that affect health policy, health behavior and health outcomes. There are no sampling concerns and there is more than sufficient power to be able to detect very small differences between study groups. Dr. Morisky is a co-principal investigator on a recently submitted NIH application to assess "social network and sexual risk for HIV/STIs among older female sex workers". It received a score in the 11 percentile so let's hope that it is funded in the next round of evaluations.



DR. STEVEN WALLACE:

Steven Wallace, Department chair and professor of Community Health Sciences in the School of Public Health, was guest Editor-in-Chief this year of a special issue of [The Gerontologist](#), entitled "[The Science of Recruitment and Retention among Ethnically Diverse Older Adults](#)." He also co-authored several policy briefs on vulnerable elders using the California Health Interview Survey through the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, where he is associate director. See [The Health of Aging Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Adults in California](#) (with Dr. Chandra Ford, CHS Assistant Professor, and others) and [The Health Status and Unique Health Challenges of Rural Older Adults in California](#). Both briefs received wide press coverage, including in the *New York Times* and *U.S. News & World Report*, in addition to numerous California print and broadcast media.



Reconnect with CHS

Help us grow our network:

- Send us your questions, comments and suggestions for the continued success of this new initiative.
- Would you like to contribute the next newsletter with a story, news item, job posting, etc? Send us an email or give us a call.
- Would you like to participate in community building events on campus and around Los Angeles? Current students could benefit from your knowledge and experience.
- Was this newsletter forwarded to you? Let us know and we will add you to the mail list.
- No longer want to receive these emails? Why Not? Let us know and we will remove your name.

Let us know how you've been by filling out the form at the link below. This questionnaire will help us serve the alumni network better while connecting you with current students, faculty, and new alumni. Help us grow our network and utilize the power of this Public Health community. You can email or mail your questionnaire to the address below.

[Alumni Information Update Form](#)

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Additionally, you can catch up with SPH Alumni, Students, and Faculty at the 2011 APHA Conference in Washington D.C.

The UCLA School of Public Health will be hosting an Alumni Reception on
Monday, October 31st from 6:30—8:30 pm
Conference Center WCC 202B

Donate to Community Health Sciences



The Department of Community Health Sciences advances social and behavioral knowledge relevant to health, health promotion, and public health practice. Excellence in research, education, and community service all take resources beyond what state funding can provide. Please help the Department by making a tax deductible donation of any amount.

Make your check out to: The UC Regents (note CHS donation in memo line) and mail to:

Department of Community Health Sciences
Attn: Preethi Thomas
UCLA School of Public Health
Box 951772
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1772

Please be sure your name, address, telephone number, and email address are attached.

Or go to <https://giving.ucla.edu/Standard/NetDonate.aspx?SiteNum=15> and donate online by designating Community Health Sciences in the "Please direct my gift to the following fund:" drop down menu.

See this newsletter and more at
<http://www.ph.ucla.edu/chs/alumni.htm>