

sph a national center of excellence in elimination of health disparities



HEALTH COVERAGE CONCERNS — At a recent news conference on the UCLA campus, results were presented from a UCLA Center for Health Policy Research report showing declining job-based coverage in California. Pictured (l. to r.) are Dr. E. Richard Brown, professor at the school and director of the center; Dean Linda Rosenstock; and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The UCLA School of Public Health has received a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant totaling \$4.25 million over five years and has been named a national center of excellence to address health disparities related to heart disease, stroke and cancer among African Americans, Latinos and Asians at the local, state and national level. The school will provide technical assistance and training to health and social-service organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and other institutions.

The award will enable the school's Center to Eliminate Health Disparities (CEHD) to build on more than two decades of work with a large and reputable network of community-based organizations and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, one of the largest county health departments in the nation, to improve health by changing physical activity and nutrition norms and practices at key community institutions. Drs. Antronette Yancey and Roshan Bastani, CEHD directors, will co-direct the new Center of Excellence.

The project will focus on changing organizational practices and policies rather than individual behavior. UCLA and L.A. County have pioneered culturally based approaches to increasing physical activity levels and healthy food choices, including incorporating brief dance breaks to music in the workplace.

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's National Healthcare Disparities Report, while health disparities for most U.S. minorities are narrowing compared to the general population, Hispanics/Latinos are falling further behind. Not only do disparities exist between various racial and ethnic groups and whites, but there are also disparities among and within racial and ethnic subgroups.

For more on the CEHD, see page 22 or visit www.ph.ucla.edu/cehd.

sph center to participate in landmark national study of children's health

The UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities (CHCFC), based in the School of Public Health, has been selected as one of 22 new study centers for the National Children's Study, a nationwide project designed to assess the effects of environmental and genetic factors on children's health in the United States. The study center will manage local participant recruitment and data collection for the nation's largest-ever study of child health.

The National Children's Study is a collaborative effort between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services (including the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at the National Institutes of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

"This study is big science and it will be one of the most important generators of new knowledge on child and adult health and development ever attempted," says Dr. Neal Halfon, director of the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities and principal investigator of the UCLA study center. "It will help children across the U.S. and shape child health guidance, interventions and policy for generations to come."

The National Children's Study will eventually follow a representative sample of 100,000 children from before birth to age 21, seeking information that will help prevent and treat some of the nation's most pressing health problems, including autism, birth defects, diabetes, heart disease and obesity. To better understand the impact of exposures on the developing fetus, infant and child, the study will recruit pregnant women, as well as women who are likely to become pregnant, in order to assess environmental health influence during the pre-pregnancy and prenatal period.

For more information on the CHCFC, see page 19 or visit www.healthychild.ucla.edu.

IOM elects ganz



Dr. Patricia Ganz, a professor in the schools of public health and medicine, whose research has changed the face of cancer survivorship, has been honored with election to the prestigious Institute of Medicine of the National Academies.

Ganz, director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control Research, based in the school and UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center (see page 19), is a founding member of the National Coalition of Cancer Survivors and is considered the top national expert on quality of life after breast cancer; her studies have changed the way the medical field views the post-treatment health problems faced by millions of former patients nationwide. Election to the Institute of Medicine is considered one of the highest honors bestowed to professionals in the fields of medicine and health.

“healthy futures” salon series

The school launched a salon series this fall to explore emerging issues in the field of public health. SPH faculty members join alumni, school donors and friends in an intimate setting for a focused discussion around today's leading public health issues.

Topics slated for discussion in 2007-08 include the cost of health care, cancer survivorship, childhood obesity and infectious diseases.

For more information on this series, or to contribute a suggestion for a salon topic, please email cdifatta@support.ucla.edu.



MATT DURKAN JOINS SPH DEVELOPMENT TEAM — Matt Durkan has joined the school as director of development, with a focus on major donor and corporate support. Durkan, who will work with Assistant Dean for Development and Alumni Relations John Sonogo, brings a wealth of fundraising and development experience to the team, including his most recent work as director of development for HALSA, the HIV-AIDS Legal Services Alliance. Durkan also previously worked at the UCLA Anderson School.

beverlee a. myers fellowship fund

The UCLA School of Public Health is the benefactor of a newly established fellowship fund in honor of Beverlee A. Myers, former head of Health Services at the school, gifted by her widower Duane (Pete) Myers of Santa Fe, N.M.

The fellowship will be awarded annually to students in the Department of Health Services. Selection criteria include scholastic excellence, personal integrity and dedication to social justice and equity in health services.

Myers, who died in 1986, was a dedicated and passionate public health professional. She served as an official in the U.S. Public Health Service, rising to become director of planning and evaluation in the office of the assistant secretary for health. Myers served as director of the California Department of Health Services from 1978 to 1983, the first woman and the first non-physician to hold that important post. She was head of Health Services at the school from 1983 until her death in 1986.

remembering walter oppenheimer



Walter Oppenheimer, a long-time friend of the school and member of the Dean's Advisory Board, passed away on August 1, 2007, at the age of 92. “Walter was a man of great passion and dedication, and his warm friendship with the school and with me personally is something I will always treasure,” says Dean Linda Rosenstock.

Oppenheimer was a philanthropist and retired fashion industry executive. He and his wife Helga, who died in 2003, owned Helga, Inc., which designed suits, dresses and evening clothes that were sold in speciality stores. Oppenheimer was a generous supporter of the school. Before Helga's death, the Oppenheims established two charitable gift annuities to provide funds for student education, and the school's main lobby was named in their honor. He noted then, “I like the fact that the school trains professionals and scientists who work to benefit the health of all members of the community, not just individuals.” Oppenheimer remembered the school in his will with a significant gift to endow a professorship in public health.

DID YOU KNOW...

You are a lifetime member of the UCLA School of Public Health Alumni Association if you are a graduate of the UCLA School of Public Health and its executive programs. If you would like more information about the activities of the Public Health Alumni Association, please call (310) 825-6464 or e-mail phaa@support.ucla.edu.