building healthy futures
UCLA School of Public Health
The UCLA School of Public Health enters its fourth decade ready to tackle the public health challenges of the 21st century. The school has some of the most talented researchers, educators, students and practitioners in the field all working to fulfill the School’s primary mission of education, research, and service.

While historically the field of public health has not been well understood, the importance of the field has become better recognized in recent years. In fact, this is a great time to be working in the field of public health. An increasing Federal investment in public health issues, the globalization of the economy, and public and media interest in public health topics have created many opportunities. These factors also contribute to the recognition of public health professionals as vital to assuring healthy individuals and communities in the U.S. and around the world.

In this era dubbed “the rediscovery of public health,” I invite our many partners to rediscover the UCLA School of Public Health and the energy we bring to solving the critical health problems of our time.

Linda Rosenstock, M.D., M.P.H.
Dean
What is Public Health?

If you ask 10 different people to define public health, chances are you will get 10 different answers. Many people will think of immunizations and health care for the uninsured but these are only part of a much bigger picture.

The field of public health strives to create healthier communities. Where medicine treats the individual, public health focuses on efforts to assess the health of people in relation to their environment. The goal of public health is to prevent disease and disability before they occur. Public health professionals develop policies and programs to protect people and help them lead healthier lives. To achieve these goals, public health crosses many disciplines, drawing from a variety of fields such as medicine, law, public policy, economics, psychology, and biology.

Making water safe to drink and air safe to breathe, controlling toxic waste, halting the spread of infectious disease, promoting healthy lifestyles, and minimizing violence in our communities are all examples of public health in action. Increasingly, public health professionals are called upon to help determine which treatments for a particular health problem are best (e.g. surgery vs. chemotherapy), and to assess and identify disparities in access to health care, quality of health care, and health status. In one form or another, everyone takes advantage of advances in public health.
The UCLA School of Public Health is one of the top schools in the country. Students receive state-of-the-art public health training combined with practical, hands-on experience. The School’s classrooms and laboratories are under the same roof as UCLA’s world-renowned hospital and medical, dental, and nursing schools, and just steps away from the University’s social and physical science facilities and the schools of engineering, law, management, and public policy.

The School is also enriched by its location in Los Angeles, where a melting pot of cultures, industries, and urban issues provide unparalleled opportunities for research, teaching and service. The School’s Southern California location also provides students and faculty with a unique opportunity to be involved with cutting edge health care issues as many of the health system changes currently sweeping the country have origins in Southern California.

In addition to the School’s impact on Los Angeles, greater California, and the U.S., the UCLA School of Public Health also serves the global community. Faculty and students are actively engaged in research and consultation in some 70 countries throughout the world. The School is a lead institution in the World Health Organization’s Global Partnership Initiatives for Health Development.
The UCLA School of Public Health
is dedicated to protecting and improving the public’s health.

THE SCHOOL:

Educates professionals for employment in the private and public sectors of the health system
Prepares future researchers and educators
Provides continuing education for practicing professionals
Conducts research to define, protect, and improve conditions for a healthy public
Contributes knowledge, expertise, and service to the community
The School of Public Health faculty includes acclaimed public health experts and innovators. Of the School’s 180 faculty members, six are members of the prestigious Institute of Medicine, three are past presidents of the American Public Health Association, and two are former presidents of the International Epidemiological Association. The School also employs over 200 staff members working to support the School’s mission.
Through pioneering research, UCLA School of Public Health faculty:

Discovered the nutritional value of vitamin E.

Clearly established the link between lifestyle and longevity — demonstrating that simple health practices such as eating breakfast, maintaining a moderate weight, eating regular meals, using alcohol in moderation, if at all, exercising moderately, getting enough sleep, and not smoking are linked to living a longer, healthier life.

Promoted the benefits of breastfeeding on a global scale. Faculty were instrumental in developing the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes and the subsequent World Health Organization resolution, Wellstart — an international breastfeeding training program for health professionals, the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, and the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action.

Completed the milestone study, “Health Status of the American Male,” which established, among other findings, the safety of vasectomy as an effective birth-control procedure.

Advocated for community-based health care services in South Central Los Angeles. Faculty played a key role in the development of the King/Drew Medical Center, which today serves 1.2 million people.

Demonstrated how HIV-related immune deficiency is transmitted among homosexual men, a discovery that has prevented millions of infections. School faculty led international efforts to control the spread of the disease, particularly in China, Thailand, and other areas of Southeast Asia.

First proposed the concept that some individuals are resistant to HIV infection. Faculty characterized factors associated with resistance to infection, providing a basis for a new strategy to develop a vaccine protecting against HIV infection.

First demonstrated that chronic exposure to air pollutants was associated with compromised growth of respiratory capacity in children and was associated with irreversible changes in lung function in adults.
Demonstrated that there is a genetic susceptibility to multiple sclerosis. Faculty determined that individuals who developed MS were more likely to have childhood virus infections after the age of 10, at which time the immune system has undergone changes associated with puberty and adolescence.

Changed the presumption that an only child grows up feeling isolated. The School's research showed that an only child has a clear social advantage — deflating notions that they are more isolated, less involved in extracurricular activities, and less liked.

Played leadership roles in California's successful campaign against tobacco use. Faculty were instrumental in determining the allocation of Proposition 99 funds for tobacco control (from the tax on cigarettes) to local health departments, schools, community health agencies, and the media.

Documented the health benefits and cost-savings of helmet use among motorcycle riders.

Pioneered the study of violence in America as a public health issue in addition to a criminal issue.

First documented the nature and extent of those not covered by health insurance in California. Responding to requests from governmental leaders, faculty also are active in helping formulate policy options at the national, state, and local levels for dealing with the issue.

Conducted critical research on the exposures to and adverse health effects of major environmental toxic chemicals including diesel exhaust, MTBE, lead, arsenic, chromium, cadmium and pesticides. UCLA faculty played important roles in translating scientific research findings into policy for protecting workers and the public from these and other toxic chemicals.
The School of Public Health has five departments representing the core disciplines in public health.

**Biostatistics** is the application and development of statistical methods to problems in biology, medicine, and public health. Methods developed by biostatisticians are used to plan population surveys and to optimally design experiments, which allow valid conclusions to be drawn and to confirm or refute assertions regarding our health. Biostatisticians then develop the analytical tools to derive the most appropriate conclusions based on the collected data. They collaborate with scientists in nearly every area related to health and they make major contributions to our understanding of cancer, AIDS, genetics, and the determinants of health.

**Community Health Sciences** explores how health-related behaviors interact with conditions in the social, cultural, physical and biological environments. Assessment, planning and evaluation are common themes in the Department's programs. The faculty is multidisciplinary and includes those whose primary training is in the social and behavioral sciences, medicine, nutrition, demography, economics and health education.

**Environmental Health Sciences** identifies, measures, and controls biological, chemical, and physical hazards in the environment for the promotion and protection of human and ecological health. The Department's graduates are highly trained scientists and professionals capable of identifying and measuring agents of environmental concern; evaluating the health, environmental, and all other aspects of such agents; developing means for their effective management; and evaluating alternative policies directed at improving and protecting environments.

**Epidemiology** is the study of the distribution and determinants of disease and injury in human populations. Epidemiologists study variations of disease in relation to such factors as age, sex, race, occupational and social characteristics, place of residence, susceptibility, exposure to specific agents, or other pertinent characteristics. The scope of the field includes the study of the patterns of disease, the causes of disease, and the control or prevention of disease.

**Health Services** examines the organization, financing, and delivery of services to prevent and treat disease. This includes public activities at local, state, and federal levels as well as the activities of private organizations. Faculty members come from such diverse fields as economics, history, law, management, medicine, planning, political science, sociology, and statistics. The common bond among faculty is a steadfast commitment to solving problems and developing innovations related to the access, cost, and quality of health services from a population-based rather than an individual patient perspective.
Despite the strides made in the field of public health, there are many challenges facing public health professionals. The UCLA School of Public Health is providing answers to many critical public health issues. A few examples of the School’s research and activities follow.

How do we better assess the health status of California’s residents?
The School’s Center for Health Policy Research, together with the California Department of Health Services and the Public Health Institute, is conducting the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) the largest survey of its kind ever conducted. The CHIS will survey 55,000 households throughout California, focusing on numerous public health issues including access to health care. The survey includes the largest-ever sampling of Latinos, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, American Indian and Alaskan Natives and African Americans. Data collection began in November 2000 and survey results will be ready for release in early 2002. The CHIS will be repeated every two years to allow us to track changes in health and health status over time.

How do we better understand the effects of neighborhoods, families, and public policy on children’s health and well being?
Research strongly suggests that the environment in which children grow up affects their physical, psychological, and social development as well as their opportunities and success in life. Realizing that neighborhoods are an important part of a child’s environment, the School of Public Health and RAND are conducting the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey in LA County. The survey will examine the effects of neighborhoods, families, and peers on children’s development; the effects of welfare reform at the neighborhood level; and the effects of residential mobility and neighborhood change. Survey results will provide information on current policy questions such as family coping strategies for day care and after school care, factors contributing to rising asthma rates in children, and determinants of children’s school readiness.

How do we address society’s overuse of antibiotics and the resulting “multi-drug resistant” diseases?
Researchers in the School’s Biostatistics department are using advanced statistical computing methods to identify genetic mutations and to characterize the drug resistance conferred by these mutations. Such research aims to stay ahead of the critical public health problem posed by drug-resistant organisms, with implications not only for the at-risk public but also in terms of the downstream cost of providing needed health care.
How do we help communities become healthier environments for children?

The School of Public Health-based Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, is forging partnerships among university-based researchers, service providers, community agencies, and affiliated institutions to improve the well-being of California’s children. The Center is developing innovative and responsive service programs; increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and distribution of health and social services; and assisting communities in transforming themselves into healthier environments for their children. The Center’s activities drew former Vice President Al Gore to UCLA and served as an inspiration for his teaching on family-centered community building.

How do we combat the increase in workplace violence?

Eighty percent of workplace homicides and up to 60 percent of nonfatal assaults occur in the course of a robbery. Research by the School’s Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center has demonstrated that businesses can efficiently reduce the risk of robbery and violent outcomes by implementing good lighting, cash control procedures, and employee training. Researchers are implementing a new security program in 400 high-risk small businesses in Los Angeles who often cannot afford security consultants. Partners in the program include the Los Angeles Police Department and the Korean Grocer’s Association. If effective, the program can be instituted nationwide to increase employee safety and save lives.

How do we reverse the decline in Los Angeles’ coastal watersheds?

Human activity during the past two centuries, especially urbanization in the past 40 years, has transformed Malibu Creek and its outlet to Santa Monica Bay into a dysfunctional ecosystem with significant environmental and public health problems. Researchers in the School’s Environmental Science and Engineering Program, working collaboratively with colleagues from across campus, assessed strategies for long-term management of the lower watershed. The researchers ultimately evaluated 38 alternatives considering feasibility, cost, effectiveness, environmental impact, and potential for controversy. The Malibu Lagoon Task Force is now beginning to implement the researchers’ recommendations as they try to determine how to counteract the problems plaguing the area.
The School of Public Health offers both masters and doctoral degrees. Students choosing to pursue a Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) or a Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.) acquire a broad knowledge and skills base with a focus on public health practice. Students earning an M.P.H. or Dr.P.H. may work in local, state or national public health agencies and health care organizations. The Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees offered by the School’s five departments are intended to prepare students for research careers. After earning a M.S. or Ph.D., students often study public health problems in academic and research institutions.

The School also offers two interdepartmental degrees — a Doctor of Environmental Science and Engineering (D.Env.) (the only program of its kind in the country) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Molecular Toxicology.

Students can combine an M.P.H. degree with a medical degree, a law degree, a Master of Business Administration, or a Master of Arts concentrating in African Area Studies, Asian American Studies, Islamic Studies, or Latin American Studies.

In addition, the school has two M.P.H. programs that cater to working professionals. The Health Services Management and Health Promotion/Health Education programs allow those with some background in health to pursue an M.P.H. degree during extended weekend sessions.
The School’s 600 students are among the most talented in the nation. They are a culturally diverse group, representing more than 35 countries and nearly every region of the U.S. UCLA School of Public Health graduates are at the forefront of all major public health efforts and are currently working in settings such as: World Health Organization (WHO); National Institutes of Health (NIH); U.S. Public Health Service; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Schools of public health and other university schools and departments; State and local health departments; Major hospitals and medical centers; Environmental agencies; Health maintenance organizations; Rural health clinics; Law firms; Advocacy organizations; Family and youth centers; Independent research organizations; and Insurance, pharmaceutical, and hospital supply companies.
The field of public health addresses a wide range of issues making it a natural for interdisciplinary collaboration. UCLA faculty and students reach beyond traditional academic boundaries to promote cooperative exchange across disciplines. Whether working with social welfare professionals to help families in crisis; collaborating with engineers, biologists, and legal experts to influence environmental policy and legislation; or teaming up with clinicians and educators to fight the spread of infectious disease; UCLA School of Public Health is steeped in a culture of collaboration. The following is a list of interdisciplinary centers sponsored by or associated with the UCLA School of Public Health.


**Center for Health Policy Research:** Jointly sponsored by the UCLA Schools of Public Health and Public Policy and Social Research, the Center conducts research on national, state, and local health policy issues; provides public service to policy makers and community leaders; and offers educational opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

**Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention:** As a joint program of the UCLA School of Public Health and the UCLA School of Medicine, the Center administers a variety of research and teaching endeavors, including the Preventive Medicine Residency Program.

**Center for Health Services Management:** The Center is designed to bring the best university-based research and education together with the best and most current management practices in the California health care community. The Center serves as a laboratory for identifying new challenges and testing new solutions through the joint efforts of the University and the health care community.

**Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities:** As a joint program of the UCLA School of Public Health, the UCLA School of Medicine, and UCLA’s affiliated medical centers, the Center offers prevention-focused programs to enhance individual and community-based health services for children; train health providers to meet today’s child and family needs; and improve public policies that affect children and families.

**Center for Human Nutrition:** The UCLA Center for Human Nutrition is a joint research unit of the Schools of Medicine and Public Health. Its purpose is to facilitate and promote research in human nutrition at the fundamental, clinical and population levels. The Center is home to UCLA’s Clinical Nutrition Research Unit, funded by the National Cancer Institute.

**Center for Occupational and Environmental Health:** The Center is a joint program of UCLA’s Schools of Public Health, Medicine and Nursing and also involves faculty from the College of Letters and Science and Schools of Public Policy and Social Research, Engineering and Applied Science, and Architecture. The Center trains occupational and environmental health professionals, conducts research, and provides service and outreach via the Labor Occupational Safety and Health and Occupational/Environmental Medicine programs.
**Center for Public Health & Disaster Relief:** The Center's mission is to provide a curricular focus area and research agenda that examines how natural and human-generated disasters relate to the public's health. The curriculum is designed to prepare public health professionals for the interdisciplinary roles they play in preparing communities prior to disaster, and during the recovery period following a mass population emergency.

**Division of Cancer Prevention & Control Research (part of Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center at UCLA):** The Division is a joint program of the School of Public Health and the School of Medicine's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. The Division promotes and fosters excellence in cancer prevention and control through rigorous research, community education, and service focused on the general population, groups at high risk for developing cancer, and cancer patients. The Division seeks to understand the behavioral and lifestyle factors that increase the risk of cancer and create programs to address these factors while also conducting cutting-edge research to address the needs of the large, and rapidly growing, number of cancer survivors and their families, including their psychosocial and quality-of-life concerns.

**Pollution Prevention Education & Research Center:** The mission of the Pollution Prevention Education and Research Center is to conserve resources, reduce or eliminate the use of toxic substances, and improve human and environmental health through an interdisciplinary program of education, research and outreach.

**Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center:** One of 10 centers in the United States funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which focus on intentional and unintentional injuries through three phases of injury control — prevention, acute care, and rehabilitation — via research, training and community service. The Center, founded in 1987, was one of the first to be located within a School of Public Health, and supports education and training leading to MPH and PhD degrees with a focus on the injury field.

**Southern California Particle Center and Supersite:** One of five major national centers, the UCLA Center brings together outstanding scientists from leading universities in Southern California to identify and conduct the highest priority research for airborne particulate matter to ensure protection of the public health.

**Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center:** Researchers and professionals from UCLA and the University of Southern California collaborate through the Center to create an interdisciplinary approach to the study and advancement of research in environmental health.