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CPHI Funds Public Health Research

In spring 2008, the CPHI developed a competitive pilot grant fund to support interdisciplinary research in public health. Two proposals were selected for 2008/2009:

I. Bennett, MD, PhD, S. Wortham, PhD and V. Gladsden, PhD (representing the School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Education) in collaboration with researchers from The Center for Literacy, Acción Comunal Latinoamericana de Montgomery County and The Maternity Care Coalition: "Barriers to Health and Education for the Children of Women with Low Literacy."

A Hillier, PhD, J. McLaughlin, MS, RD, M. Chilton, PhD, C. Cannuscio, ScD, A. Karpyn, PhD, L. Kilby, MS, RD, LDN and K. Gross, MPH: "Evaluating Access to Healthy Foods for Women, Infants and Children." This research program represents a collaborative effort between Penn (School of Design and School of Medicine), Drexel University School of Public Health, the Food Trust and N.O.R.T.H.



Director's Message

Marjorie Bowman

The 2007/2008 academic year was an exciting and productive time for Penn's Center for Public Health Initiatives. We launched several new initiatives aimed at encouraging interdisciplinary public health research and education such as:

* A public health speaker series featuring experts such as Dr. Donald Schwarz, Deputy Mayor for Health and Opportunity for Philadelphia and Dr. David Blumenthal, Director, Institute for Health Policy at Massachusetts General Hospital.

* The formation of interdisciplinary working groups addressing issues such as food deserts and improving health in West Philadelphia.

* A funding program for interdisciplinary public health research projects.

* The GIS and Public Health Institute, which offered continuing education units.

Next academic year, we are collaborating with the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion to develop a continuing education series centered on the PBS documentary "Unnatural Causes." We are also developing a Qualitative and Mixed Methods Winter Institute and working to establish a Peace Corps Fellows Program.

We hope you enjoy the second edition of "The Public Health Record"!



Penn Asian Health Initiatives Addresses Health Disparities

Since 2003, the Penn Asian Health Initiatives has been a visible presence in the City of Philadelphia's Asian immigrant community. Celebrating the School of Medicine's principles of increased access, integrating knowledge, and local and global engagement, the program is translating those tenets into viable actions with interactive and culturally sensitive outreach work, including health fairs, immunization clinics, cancer education workshops, and the continual development of strong partnerships with ethnic community-based organizations, academic collaborations, and innovative research.

Led by Giang Nguyen, the Penn Asian Health Initiatives aims to increase the currently limited pool of health data available on Asian American communities and enhance access to quality health information for this population. Dr. Nguyen is currently leading several studies that examine cancer information seeking, community interconnectedness and geriatric depression, behaviors related to clinical trial

participation, and the role of public health communication in affecting the health of this community.



Above: Discussing Asian Health Initiatives progress with community stakeholders

One example of this work is a new project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Recognizing the importance and potential in interdisciplinary collaboration, the Penn Asian Health Initiatives brought together the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition; WHY? Public Broadcasting; the Thomas Jefferson University Department of Health Policy; the Temple University Center

for Intergenerational Learning; and the Penn Department of Family Medicine and Community Health for a project entitled, "Media Partnerships for Community Engagement in Southeast Asian Health." This project engages immigrant Laotian and Vietnamese elders in the process of health needs identification, first-person storytelling, video production, and community discussion about health.

Building on prior positive experiences and successes, the Asian Health Initiatives will continue to nurture community relationships, explore innovative approaches in health communication, and establish interventions to address health disparities.

GIS and Public Health Institute a Success!

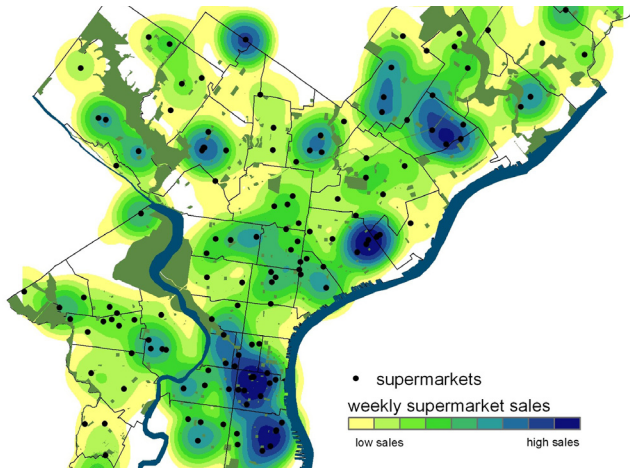
During the week of June 9th, the CPHI, the Cartographic Modeling Lab and the College of General Studies facilitated an interdisciplinary and innovative course in the use of computer mapping to inform public health decision-making.

- Course instructors from Penn were drawn from the School of Design, School of Social Policy and Practice, School of Medicine, School of Engineering and the Graduate School of Education.
- Experts from Temple and Widener University also acted as instructors as did colleagues from the Philadelphia Health Department and The Food Trust.
- Institute participants, representing departments of health, academic centers, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, came from the Philadelphia area as well as from New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Kansas and Alabama. Key sponsors included the Penn Institute for Urban Research, The Leonard Davis Institute, the RWJ Health & Society Scholars program and ESR I, the developers of ArcView GIS.

Faculty Spotlight



Giang T. Nguyen, MD, MPH, MSCE, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health, a Senior Fellow of the Center for Public Health Initiatives and a Senior Fellow of the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, is a researcher whose work focuses on preventive health, communication, and community engagement with linguistically-isolated Asian immigrant populations. His projects use a community-based participatory research approach (CBPR), where community members play an active role in identifying and studying problems that affect their communities. Dr. Nguyen has been a leader in local, regional, and national organizations addressing health disparities, advocacy, HIV/AIDS, and cancer control. As a member of the local American Cancer Society's Asian Advisory Committee, he helps to inform community leaders about cancer control activities and scientific discoveries affecting Asian Americans. In addition, he serves as a board member for the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC) and AIDS Services in Asian Communities (ASIAC); both non-profit groups provide culturally appropriate health and social services to linguistically isolated communities in Philadelphia. Dr. Nguyen's research, outreach, and education program (the Penn Asian Health Initiatives) is described in a separate article in this newsletter.



Above: Access to supermarkets in Philadelphia varies by neighborhood. As this map shows, larger supermarkets in the city are found in South Philadelphia and Lower Northeast while North and West Philadelphia are under-served.

Upcoming Events

During the 2008/2009 Academic Year, the CPHI will be collaborating with the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP) to air all 7 segments of the PBS series “Unnatural Causes.” Unnatural Causes seeks to understand the underlying causes of health disparities and answer the question, “Is inequality making us sick?” In addition to showing this important documentary, we will be inviting speakers featured within it to talk about their research and answer questions related to the topic at hand. For more information about Unnatural Causes, visit <http://www.unnaturalcauses.org>.



CPHI welcomes new staff!

The Center for Public Health Initiatives welcomes Jeannette Schroeder, our new Program Coordinator. Jeannette is a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and will be joining our team this July.

Save the Date!

The CPHI in collaboration with CHERP will air the first episode of “Unnatural Causes” entitled, “In Sickness and in Wealth” on September 15th from 12:00pm – 2:00pm in Claudia Cohen Hall, in The Terrace Room. Adewale Troutman, MD, MPH, MA, Director of the Louisville Metro Health Department will be the featured speaker during this lunch time event.

Please join us!

Public Health in the News

Cliff Akiyama, MA, awarded citation from State Representative Roebuck

Cliff Akiyama, Penn MPH Student and lecturer in Family and Community Health at Penn’s School of Nursing, was celebrated this spring with a citation from State Representative James Roebuck for his efforts to end youth violence in Philadelphia. Mr. Akiyama was also appointed to the Congressional Award Foundation Board of Directors by the US House of Representatives Minority Leader John A. Boehner.



Above: Dr. Ted Emmett, speaking at a recent meeting

Dr. Ted Emmett and colleagues awarded 7th annual Community Campus Partnerships for Health Award

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) announced on May 4th that the partnership between the University of Pennsylvania and the Decatur Community Association is the recipient of the 7th annual CCPH Award. The award highlights the power and potential of partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions as a strategy for social justice.

The award-winning partnership began in 2002 when Hong Zhang, a Penn resident working in Parkersburg, WV and Edward Emmett, a professor of occupational medicine at Penn, learned that C8 from a DuPont production facility in nearby WV was contaminating the water of the Little Hocking Water Association in Southeastern Ohio. “The partnership employed an innovative method of disseminating results in the community,” noted CCPH Executive Director Sarena D. Seifer in presenting the award. “In what they have termed the Community First Communication Model, study findings are released first to study participants and then to the broader community, instead of publishing study results in scientific journals and hoping the results trickle down to the community.”

The resulting community ownership of the results altered the balance of power within the community, and helped lead to the voluntary decision of the chemical facility to provide free bottled water to those served by the water supply. Over 95% of residents surveyed made a change in their residential drinking water source as a result.

Alumni Update

Joel A. Fein, MD, MPH '06, is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine at Penn's School of Medicine and an attending physician in the Emergency Department at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Dr. Fein is also the Director of the Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center (PCVPC), which is a CDC-funded Center of Excellence. PCVPC's goal is to prevent violence and aggression in the lives of young people in West and Southwest Philadelphia. In addition to leading PCVPC, Dr. Fein is also the Principal Investigator of a federally funded effort to develop computerized behavioral health screening of adolescents who come to the Emergency Department and he is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Institute for Safe Families.



Left: Penn MPH
Class of 2006
Alumnus Joel Fein



**The Center for Public Health Initiatives
congratulates the seven MPH
graduates of the class of 2008!**

MPH Program Info

Congratulations to the 2008 Penn MPH Graduating Class.

Those graduating with their MPH degree were Sameena Azhar, Eric Griffin, Emily Hall, Joanna Hosten, J. Nicole Martin, Lynda Nolan and Michelle Sanchez.

The 2008 Shiriki Kumanyika Award winner

was Joanna Holsten who was presented the award at the May 19th graduation ceremonies.

A New Student Orientation for incoming MPH students will be held September 2nd from 5:00pm -7:30pm 3401 Market Street, Suite 202. A Welcome reception will follow.

An Open House for Prospective MPH Students is scheduled to take place October 8th at 5:30pm in the Golkin Room, Houston Hall.

www.publichealth.med.upenn.edu/



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