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CPHI/MPH Updates

The CPHI/MPH program has a new office space!

The Center for Public Health Initiatives and the Master of Public Health Program are happy to announce that we have now moved to our new space on the first floor of the Anatomy-Chemistry Building. This smaller section of the larger remodel project was completed in early May.

The newly remodeled space includes six offices, one student work room, and one break room. Furthermore, we now have access to three classroom/meeting rooms, which are available to CPHI/MPH faculty and students. Please contact either Jenny Schroeder or Karen Kelly for questions on reserving the spaces.

If you happen to find yourself near the first floor of the Anatomy-Chemistry building, we welcome you to come by, get some tea, coffee, or hot cocoa in the break room, and say hello. To visit Wendy Voet or Jenny Schroeder of the CPHI, please go to room 146. To visit Jackie McLaughlin or Karen Kelly of the MPH program, please go to room 143.

Detailed directions to the CPHI can be found under "contact us" on our website: www.cphi.upenn.edu.



Director's Message Marjorie Bowman

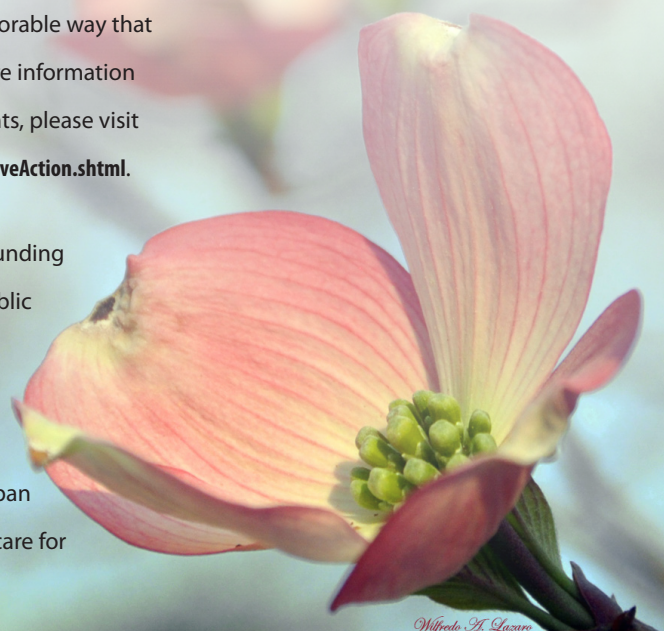
This is an exciting time for the CPHI! We recently moved into new, renovated space and are in the midst of planning innovative and meaningful projects for the 2009/2010 academic year.

We are thrilled to present our 2009/2010 Seminar Series, "Creative Action: The Arts in Public Health." This series will showcase how use of the arts allows artists and public health practitioners and researchers to bring public health issues to the forefront in a provocative and memorable way that inspires action. For more information about the planned events, please visit www.cphi.upenn.edu/CreativeAction.shtml.

The CPHI will also be funding five interdisciplinary public health pilot grants in 2009-2010 focused on pressing issues such as violence prevention, urban gardening and patient care for

those infected with HIV. Details on the funded grants can be found on page 4. Updates from last year's 2008-2009 pilot grants can be found on the inside spread of this issue (pages 2-3).

Finally, the CPHI is looking forward to the APHA conference to be held in Philadelphia November 7th to 11th. We will be hosting a mixer at the conference and all are invited to attend. And as always, if you have suggestions for us as we develop our programs and events, please let us know. Enjoy the summer!



Mirinda A. Lazaro

2008-2009 CPHI Pilot Grant Updates

Evaluating Access to Healthy Foods for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Amy Hillier, School of Design (Co-PI); Jackie McLaughlin, Penn Master of Public Health Program (Co-PI); Mariana Chilton, Drexel University School of Public Health (Co-Investigator); Carolyn Cannuscio, Penn Family Medicine & Community Health (Co-Investigator); Allison Karpyn, The Food Trust (Co-Investigator); The Food Trust (Community Partner); NORTH, Inc. - Managers of the Philadelphia WIC program (Community Partner)

In October 2009, the federal government's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) will begin providing vouchers to participants for fruits and vegetables, among other new healthy options. Previously, the only fruits and vegetables included on the WIC vouchers were carrots for pregnant women, 100% fruit juice for all households, and farmer's market vouchers in the summer. This major policy change has the potential to significantly impact the more than eight million families that receive WIC benefits as well as the food environment in low-income neighborhoods. In June 2008, co-PIs Amy Hillier and Jackie McLaughlin (featured right) were awarded one of two 2008 CPHI pilot grants to conduct baseline research about the food choices that WIC participants make and the availability of healthy foods in all stores within two high poverty ZIP codes in North Philadelphia.



With the help of Philadelphia's WIC staff, the team developed a survey for WIC participants that focused on the types of food they currently purchase. Preliminary findings showed that many WIC participants conduct their regular grocery shopping somewhere different from their WIC shopping. On average, participants reported traveling farther for their regular grocery shopping (generally conducted at low-price supermarkets) than for their WIC shopping, which they tended to do closer to home at corner stores. Two-thirds of participants reported that they usually purchase fruits and vegetables when they go grocery shopping. Most participants also indicated that they can afford to purchase fruits and vegetables in their neighborhood and that they have a good choice of stores and fresh fruit and vegetables in their neighborhood.

To evaluate the availability of healthy foods in the two North Philadelphia ZIP codes, the team used a modified Nutrition Environment Measure Survey in Stores (NEMS-S) in 150 markets—85% of which were corner stores. In contrast to the findings from the WIC participant survey, the preliminary results from the NEMS survey showed that more than one-third of the stores in the target ZIP codes had no fresh fruits or vegetables at all, and those that did tended to only stock bananas, tomatoes, and green peppers.

In addition to the surveys, two focus groups were also conducted with store vendors who may be significantly impacted by the new WIC policy. In order to be a WIC-certified store under the new policy, vendors will need to stock fruits and vegetables and other new foods. Concerns raised by the vendors included a lack of air conditioning or adequate refrigeration space to stock the new items and a low demand for fresh produce, which contributes to a higher price point and more waste.

To evaluate the impact of the policy after its implementation, the team plans on surveying the same WIC participants and stores and repeating focus groups with vendors. The researchers are also planning on conducting in-depth interviews and training participants in photo-documentation methods.

Linda Kilby, the Executive Director of NORTH, Inc., stated "this is important work and I am excited to see the results from the second round of interviews and focus groups. The small vendors will be challenged to supply the food items their community needs and wants, but they are key to successful implementation of this change."

Amy Hillier Co-Principal Investigator

Amy Hillier, MSW, PhD is an Assistant Professor of City and Regional Planning in the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania. Trained in social work practice and social welfare research, she specializes in spatial analysis of racial disparities in health and housing. Her public health research has focused on how urban environments impact childhood obesity. She directed data collection and analysis in Philadelphia for a five-city study about outdoor advertising and neighborhood racial and income composition (Yancey et al 2009; Hillier et al forthcoming) and is currently leading the Philadelphia team for a five-city study of the validity and generalizability of SOPARC, a tool for measuring physical activity levels in parks (Deborah Cohen, PI).



Jackie McLaughlin Co-Principal Investigator

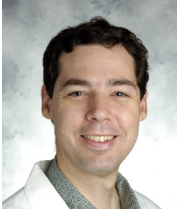
Jackie McLaughlin, MS, RD is the Associate Director of Penn's Master of Public Health program, and is a registered dietitian with an MS in clinical nutrition. Her practice has focused on wellness and chronic disease prevention in underserved populations, particularly women and children living in poverty. She has extensive experience in the provision of direct services, program development and evaluation, health advocacy, nutrition policy initiatives, and nutrition education. She served as a WIC Certified Professional Authority for 10 years in both Pennsylvania and Delaware and managed the WIC subcontracting site at the Medical College of Pennsylvania office for three years.



SNAPPS: The Survey of Norristown Area Preschool and Pediatric Services

Ian Bennett

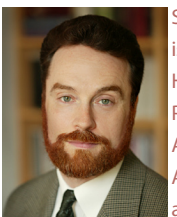
Co-Principal Investigator



Ian M. Bennett, MD, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the School of Medicine, and Senior Fellow in the Center for Public Health Initiatives and the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Bennett is currently in the second year of a five year career development award from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to develop interventions reducing obstacles to pediatric care for the children of mothers with low literacy. Dr. Bennett has also been recognized as a “Health Disparities Scholar” by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, National Institutes of Health.

Stanton Wortham

Co-Principal Investigator



Stanton Wortham is the Judy and Howard Berkowitz Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. He also has appointments in Anthropology, Communications and Folklore. His research applies techniques from linguistic anthropology to study interaction, learning and identity development in classrooms, organizations and communities. He has also studied media discourse and autobiographical narrative. His recent work focuses on Latino immigrants moving to towns without a history of Latino presence, especially the education and health challenges that they face.

Ian M. Bennett MD PhD, Penn School of Medicine (Co-PI); Stanton Wortham PhD, Penn Graduate School of Education (Co-PI); The Center for Literacy (Community Partner); Acción Comunal Latinoamericana de Montgomery County (Community Partner); The Maternity Care Coalition (Community Partner)

Parents must navigate various institutions to obtain needed services for their preschool age children. Poverty, low literacy, limited English proficiency and undocumented status can make this navigation more daunting. Thus families who most need services often face the toughest obstacles. The SNAPPS project (Survey of Norristown Area Preschool and Pediatric Services), a collaboration between the School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Education, is exploring the barriers that families encounter and the strategies that they use to overcome these obstacles. It turns out that obstacles faced in navigating medical services are sometimes similar to, and at other times interconnected with, obstacles faced in obtaining preschool education.

Norristown is interesting from both education and public health points of view. It is close to Philadelphia, in Montgomery County, but it has a distinctive history as a county seat and transportation crossroads that has experienced immigration, industrialization, deindustrialization, white flight, and a decaying quasi-urban center. Norristown has significant poverty, with 34% of families with children under the age of five below the poverty level. Norristown is also a “New Latino Diaspora” town, a town that has not traditionally had significant Latino presence that has experienced a large influx of predominantly Mexican immigrants over the past decade.



Education and pediatric care are generally isolated from each other, but parents must navigate both worlds for their preschool age children. Furthermore, the two institutions must exchange information—and this exchange often does not work well, resulting in even more hurdles for parents. Parents whose children are in greatest need of high quality preschool have the greatest difficulty overcoming these hurdles.

The SNAPPS project involves several components. With an advisory board of community based service providers, including the Maternity Care Coalition, Acción Comunal Latinoamericano de Montgomery County, and the Center for Literacy, SNAPPS partners have built relationships with the community and laid the groundwork for future interventions. The team conducted focus group and individual interviews with preschool and pediatric care stakeholders, including preschool directors, pediatric health care providers, social service agencies, state and county level public health practitioners, and parents. Parent interviews were carried out both among parents who utilize preschool services as well as those who do not.

The results show that there is dramatic mismatch in resources to need, comparing Norristown to neighboring communities. While there is a waiting list for high quality preschool services within Norristown, openings are available within just a couple of miles. The current system does not help parents identify nearby programs, however. Furthermore, pediatric providers do not generally understand the differences between high quality and non-educationally oriented preschool programs—which is a missed opportunity to counsel parents. To help address these challenges the SNAPPS guide to preschool and pediatric services — a comprehensive list of services in the area— was produced in order to help parents navigate these systems more easily.

CPHI/MPH Updates

2009-2010 CPHI Pilot Grant Recipients

The CPHI has awarded funding to the following recipients:

Developing Adolescent RADAR to Screen for Adolescent Dating Violence

PI: Dr. Joel Fein

Community Partner: Institute for Safe Families

Innovative Methods to Evaluate Impacts of Urban Community Gardens

PIs: Drs. Domenic Vitiello and JA Grisso

Community Partner: Isles, Camden City Garden Club

The Use of Mobile Telemedicine for Remote Diagnosis in HIV Infected Patients in Botswana

PIs: Drs. Carrie Kovarik and Rahat Azfar

Community Partners: Princess Marina Hospital, 14 community clinics and district hospitals in Botswana

The PREVENT Project

PI: Dr. Peter Cronholm

Community Partners: Neighborhood Youth Achievement Program (NYAP), Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Institute for Safe Families, Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR), the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, the Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Community Services Fatherhood Initiative, PDPH, WHY

Substance Abuse, Trafficking, and Everyday Violence as the Downstream Products of Political Violence and Civil War

PIs: Drs. Fran Barg, Philippe Bourgois, and Charles Branas

Community Partner: Universidad Francisco Morroquin, Guatemala City, Guatemala

Upcoming Events

Below, please find the schedule for upcoming CPHI events, including the fall schedule for our seminar series "Creative Action: The Arts in Public Health".

September 14th @ 12pm - Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

Speaker: Jane Golden, Director

Location: Amado Recital Room, Irvine Auditorium

September 17th @ 4pm - A spoken word performance by Toni Yancey

Performer: Toni Yancey, Co-Director, Center to Eliminate Health Disparities, UCLA

Location: Heyer Sky Lounge, Harrison College House

October 7th @ 4pm - Visual Legal Advocacy in Public Health

Speaker: Regina Austin, Professor, UPenn Law School

Location: TBD

October 12th @ 3pm - InterAction: Using Drama to Explore Violence Prevention

Performers: InterAct Theatre Company

Location: Terrace Room, Cohen Hall

November 2nd - "Let Me Down Easy"

Performer: Anna Deveare Smith

Location: Zeller-Bach Theater

December 3rd - CPHI 2009 Retreat

December 7th - Photovoice: "Righteous Dopefiend"

Speaker: Philippe Bourgois, Professor, UPenn School of Arts & Sciences/ Medicine

Location: Slought Foundation

For more information, please visit our events site:

www.cphi.upenn.edu/events.shtml

MPH News

Congratulations to the following MPH students who received scholarships from the MPH Program this spring semester:

Daniel Addyson Inna Bleckman Maya Dewan Shally Iyer

The MPH website has a new look!

Check us out at www.med.upenn.edu/publichealth/

CPHI Success!

Summer Institute on GIS & Public Health

On June 10-12, the CPHI held its annual Summer Institute on GIS ("Geographic Information Systems") and Public Health. Dr. Amy Hillier, a CPHI Senior Fellow and Assistant Professor in the School of Design, led the institute with several others representing the School of Medicine, the Cartographic Modeling Lab, the Food Trust, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, and Temple University. The course was highly rated by participants in the evaluation. Examples of participant feedback included the following:



Pictured: Course leader Amy Hillier explains to participants Delphine Simms and Elaine Yuen how to use a GPS device.

"This was an extremely well-conceived, well-run institute. I can't imagine any other short-session being stacked with as many informative and knowledgeable professionals from which to learn and expand one's outlook. Thanks for a job well-done!"

"The institute was incredible. I learned more than expected and enjoyed engaging with colleagues from across the disciplines."

The CPHI thanks all of those who participated in our Institute, and we look forward to hosting the institute again next year!



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