December 2019

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The Nutrition Department will be closed for its holiday break from December 24, 2018 to January 2, 2020. Happy holidays!

The End of Year Holiday Message from Dr. Frank Hu

Dear Members of the Nutrition Department:

As 2019 draws to a close, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of you for your steadfast support and commitment to our department. It has been another exciting year and one filled with many different accomplishments and activities. This year we have launched a brand new 65-credit program offering a MPH degree in Nutrition that will extend the reach of our education beyond research into clinical settings and public health organizations. Our first students have enrolled in this program this September. This year, our department has also added a new faculty member, Dr. Kyu Ha Lee, Assistant Professor of Integrative Genomic Epidemiology. In addition, Dr Josiemer Mattei has been named the Donald and Sue Pritzker Associate Professor of Nutrition.

Our Nutrition faculty continue to be successful in obtaining funding for NIH grants in what remains a challenging funding environment, and Dr Jorge Chavarro, Associate Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology, has recently received funding from the NHLBI to strengthen the infrastructure necessary to collect data on traditional and emerging risk factors for heart and lung diseases and to document the occurrence of these conditions within three related cohorts: the Nurses’ Health Study II (NHS-II), the Nurses’ Health Study 3 (NHS3), and the Growing Up Today Study (GUTS). Dr Walter Willett, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, co-chaired the EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems, which issued its long-awaited report in The Lancet in January. Once again our Nutrition Source website enjoyed the highest number of readers of all the Harvard Chan School websites.

The Department continued to expand its other outreach activities with the 20th Annual Harvard Nutrition and Obesity Symposium, Longevity and Aging: Nutritional and Metabolic Mechanisms, held on July 10-11, 2019 and our 15th Annual Stare-Hegsted Lecture, delivered by Dr Miriam Nelson, PhD, a professor emerita at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University on October 29th. Dr Nelson spoke about “Dietary Guidelines and Sustainability: Politics, Policies, and Practice”. For its 5th year in a row, the SYMPOSIUM ON OMICS, ADVANCES, APPLICATIONS, AND
TRANSLATION IN NUTRITION AND EPIDEMIOLOGY, chaired by Dr Frank Hu, Professor and Chair, and Dr Miguel Martínez-Gonzalez, Adjunct Professor, was held with the participation of investigators from both sides of the Atlantic. To honor the 50th Anniversary of the landmark White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health and also to look ahead to the current challenges and potential solutions, the Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy at Tufts University and the Nutrition Department at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health hosted an anniversary symposium on October 3rd and 4th.

Our staff, students, postdocs, and faculty have been widely recognized for their outstanding work. Katrina Soriano, Executive Director in the Departments of Nutrition and the Department of Molecular Metabolism, received the 2019 Sarah K. Wood Award for Outstanding Staff Performance. Hilary Farmer, NutriNews Editor, was selected as a 2019 Harvard Hero. Jake Beckerman, PhD student in the department, was named a Djokovic Science and Innovation Fellow for 2019-2020. Nina Sayles, an MPH65 Nutrition student, was awarded the 2019 James Beard Foundation National Scholars Program North East Award, a one-time award of $20,000. Aviva Musicus, ScD student, was selected as a Bloom Fellowship recipient. Dr Jun Li, Postdoctoral Fellow, was awarded the highly competitive Stamler Award at the Council meeting of the AHA Epi|Lifestyle meeting. Dr Andrea Lopez-Cepero was selected by El Mundo Boston as one of the 2019 Latino 30 under 30 honorees for her outstanding work and dedication. Dr Lilian Cheung was selected as a recipient of the 2019 Alumni Award of Merit, the highest honor bestowed on alumni of the HSPH by their peers. Dr Edward Giovannucci, Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology, was selected as the recipient of the 2019 AACR-American Cancer Society Award for Research Excellence in Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention in April during the AACR Annual Meeting 2019.

Looking ahead to 2020, we will continue to strengthen our research, translational, and educational programs and expand interdisciplinary collaborations within and outside our department and school. The success of these programs will ensure the continued and future success of the Department. We will be holding the Nutrition Department Retreat on February 12, 2020 at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center. I hope that the retreat will lay the foundation for a future strategic plan for the department. It has been truly a privilege and honor for me to work closely with so many talented and dedicated faculty, staff, and students in the past year and I look forward with enthusiasm to another great year ahead.

Best wishes for a healthy and joyful holiday season!

Frank Hu
Chair, Department of Nutrition

**MONDAY NUTRITION SEMINARS**

The Department of Nutrition holds its weekly Monday Nutrition Seminar Series every Monday throughout the academic year. The talks are varied, but they highlight the many different aspects of cutting-edge research that is currently being conducted in the fields of nutrition and global public health. These seminars are held from 1:00-1:20 pm in Kresge 502 at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The seminars are free and open to the public.

Due to the Winter Recess and Martin Luther King Day, there will be no Monday Nutrition Seminars until February 3, 2020.

*For more information, contact: hfarmer@hsph.harvard.edu*
Drs Christopher Duggan and Deirdre Tobias Discuss New Plans for the AJCN under Their Leadership

Dr Christopher Duggan, a faculty member in academic and clinical nutrition at Boston Children’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School and Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, was recently appointed by the American Society for Nutrition as its new editor-in-chief of The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (AJCN).

Duggan is currently Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and a Professor in the Departments of Nutrition and Global Health and Population at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He has authored more than 300 research and review articles and has edited several books including Nutrition in Pediatrics and Clinical Management of Intestinal Failure. He enjoys being a faculty member in our Nutrition Department since he gets to hear about top nutrition science from people from all over the world!

Dr Deirdre Tobias is Assistant Professor of Medicine, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition. Dr. Tobias is an associate epidemiologist in the BWH Department of Medicine’s Division of Preventive Medicine Her primary research interests include identifying lifestyle risk factors for prevention of obesity-related chronic diseases, including gestational diabetes in pregnancy, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. She has recently been appointed by AJCN as its new Academic Editor.

Established in 1952, AJCN is the highest peer-reviewed journal in its category, with a 2018 Impact Factor of 6.568 and a standing in the top 5% of all journals included in the Journal Citation Reports from Clarivate Analytics.

NN: Dr Duggan, congratulations! You and Dr Tobias must be very excited to step into your new roles as Editor-in-Chief and Academic Editor, respectively, of The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition!

CD: We’re very excited! My nine predecessors in this role have all left their indelible mark on the Journal, establishing it as the top-ranked peer-reviewed journal in the field and the American Society for Nutrition’s flagship journal. It is on their shoulders that I look to the future and reach onward and upward.

The AJCN is one of the most well-established journals in the world and is the highest ranked journal in its category—its strength is original research articles. Over 1500 papers are submitted to the journal every year. The AJCN is unique because its focus is on applied human nutrition. We would like to broaden and deepen this approach with a variety of nutrition studies of different human conditions—including healthy
populations, malnutrition, over-nutrition, patients with clinical diseases, etc. If we combine this approach with a commitment to excellent, cutting-edge papers to advance research, and continue to attract papers of excellent methodological design, we will continue to make the AJCN a top-tier journal.

NN: I understand that your vision for the journal dovetails very nicely with the ASN’s Vision 2028, especially with regard to research, policy work, advocacy, and regulation. What is your vision for the future direction of the journal?

CD: Where new technologies, including -omics sciences, “big data,” and the study of the microbiome, as well as unforeseen developments in nutrition science, hold great promise for optimizing health and nutrition, we will explore these new methods in our journal’s pages. We will also work to engage more nutrition experts in educating medical students to better address diet-related causes of mortality and morbidity; evaluate the social determinants of diseases relating to nutritional outcomes; and establish new categories of research papers on sustainability and environmental health where recognition of climate change and its impact on agriculture and nutrition is denied.

Editor’s note: For a more comprehensive description of the journal’s vision for the future, please see: https://academic.oup.com/ajcn/article-abstract/109/2/245/5305834?redirectedFrom=fulltext

NN: Wow! That’s quite a tall order. How do you plan to actually implement some of these ideas?

CD: Well, in addition to maintaining our standard nutrition science sections, we plan to introduce some new sections in the journal. One of these is called Great Debates in Nutrition. Dr David Ludwig, our Associate Editor who will be leading these debates, plans to keep the discourse respectful, honest, and the discussion illuminating between scientists who interpret data in different ways. We will present two opposing approaches, but then find a way to come together. For example, this section will be arranged according to The Main Argument For / Against the Proposition, Refutation, Rebuttal, and Common Ground. The Common Ground section will be written by the two authors and will include bulleted lists of points of agreement and suggested research to resolve remaining disagreements.
DT: Yes, our Great Debate section is exciting and has been well-received. It will be moderated professionally and collegially by David Ludwig, with its Pro, Con, Consensus—Where Do We Go from Here? format.

CD: We will also have a Nutrigenomics and Precision Nutrition section. The AJCN has already had some papers in the past on this topic, but we feel that Nutrigenomics now merits a new category in which we will highlight its role as a separate content with its own editor. The journal wants to emphasize this type of work because more and more studies are employing -omics methods to do one of the following: (1) identify biomarkers related to dietary intake with the hope to improve dietary assessment; (2) identify metabolic pathways altered following dietary interventions to enhance our understanding of the biology of the interventions; and (3) study relationships between dietary intake and disease risk. The growth of such studies and the development of more integrative analyses to use multi-omic data drives the need for a new article category. The field has relied mostly on self-reported instruments such as FFQs in past—although these tools remain indispensable for human nutrition research, the Nutrigenomics breakthrough may develop complementary and more accurate biomarkers in future, and will use both applied and methodological research. Dr Lorraine Brennan will be the Associate Editor of this section.

DT: Right. Our new ‘omics section will be cutting-edge. A new Wild West. Right now it has lots of potential, but no current consensus as to what to do with the data.

CD: Dr Jessica Fanzo will be the Associate Editor of the Food Systems and the Environment section. Sustainable diets have not always been subjected to rigorous evaluation. The AJCN will be soliciting cutting-edge papers that disentangle research that spans food system activities and actors, environmental change and health and nutrition outcomes, taking into account socioeconomic, political and societal transitions that are rapidly changing in the 21st century. The research space is complex and requires a convergence of new disciplines coming together in order to understand benefits and trade-offs of evidence so vital to improving diets and nutrition. We are looking for agriculture, food value chains, climate, environment, and diet themes to come together to answer the many evidence gaps that impact nutrition and human health. There is a need for integration of perspectives of environmentally sustainable food production, inclusive value chains and food environments, interventions that support public health, and consumption and consumer behavior. Finally, there is a need for high-quality analytical methods to collate, curate, and analyze data across food systems, integration of data sets across disciplines and new empirical research to solve this grand challenge in sustainable development.
Finally, we will have a new section on **Women’s Nutrition**, and **Dr Parul Christian** will be its Associate Editor. Our department has the Nurses’ Health Study here which has focused on women’s health issues, but this topic is not well-represented globally. Highlighting its role will attract more papers to advance the science. Women and girls hold roles in their communities that make them drivers of development as individuals, and influencers of the health and well-being of their families. To equip women and girls to succeed in school, maximize work productivity, have, if they wish, their own healthy children and enjoy healthy, long lives, they must receive appropriate nutrition through all of these periods. In a changing landscape where we increasingly recognize the importance of a life-course approach, the previous AJCN article category of “Pregnancy & Lactation” seems markedly insufficient to capture the broad spectrum of clinical and research endeavors in Women’s Nutrition. For example, over 18% of the world’s population faces issues of over- and under-nutrition. Since adolescent girls have not been historically prioritized in global research, there is a significant data gap regarding the burden of low body mass index (BMI) and stunting in adolescent girls in low and middle-income countries. Conversely, the rising burden of overweight and obesity and eating disorders and related mental health issues that require novel strategies for intervening have dramatically increased in high income settings, which may be closely followed by similar trends globally.

In contrast, the rising prevalence of obesity in the US and other high income countries have resulted in enormous challenges for obstetric health, with complications of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, macrosomia and C-sections surpassing previous rates. Globally, 375 million women are obese. Our knowledge of the importance of preconception and interconception nutrition, beyond folate for prevention of neural tube defects, is very limited, and increasingly funders and researchers are moving in the direction of elucidating both mechanisms of and interventions for the early life events of implantation, placentation, and angiogenesis that have nutrition at the core and influenced through epigenetics. Finally, healthy aging in women is also of particular relevance to the field, which may be linked to their reproductive and early life experience (e.g., postpartum weight gain may relate to obesity; long term health benefits may accrue from breast feeding; adolescent nutrition has lifelong consequences for bone health). The AJCN will still continue a renewed focus on lactation and breast milk composition, though.

**NN**: Do you plan on making any other changes?

**CD**: in keeping with the times, we would like to improve the journal’s social media presence. We have recently announced an RFA for a young career nutrition scientist who will work as an Associated Editor to help improve our social media presence. So if you know of anyone who might be interested, please tell them to get in touch with me!

**NN**: Dr Tobias, you must be very excited about your new role as Academic Editor of the AJCN. What will you be doing in this capacity?

**DT**: So far I’ve contributed to implementing a more streamlined submission process for authors, and to adopt a hassle-free submission policy. This has been well-received! I also coordinate press releases and social media, and have put a process in place for this. This new opportunity has also afforded me to learn behind the scenes of academic publishing—I find it to be very interesting and educational. I also make some editorial decisions with Chris Duggan as I am the editor for peer reviews if they fall within my own field of nutritional epidemiology. I can now see the Bigger Picture with my new role, and Chris and I complement each other very nicely.

**NN**: How has your academic background prepared you for this new role?

**DT**: My academic background is in nut epi. I got my doctorate here with **Dr Frank Hu** as my advisor. My research focused on dietary patterns and gestational diabetes risk + after GDM pregnancy, along with lifestyle factors for the prevention of diabetes. I am now an Assistant Professor at BWH in the Preventive Medicine department and still continue in this area, incorporating metabolomics, nut epi methods, and diet intervention trials. I also teach the Nutritional Epidemiology course here at HSPH with **Dr Walter Willett**. I split my time part-time here in the Nutrition Department, and part-time at my Commonwealth Avenue office.
AWARDS AND HONORS

The American Heart Association Council on Lifestyle and Cardiometabolic Health selected Dr Frank Sacks, Professor of Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, for the 2019 Robert I. Levy Memorial Lecture. Sacks spoke about his lab’s research on types of HDL, their metabolism in humans, dietary effects, and relation to cardiovascular disease.

Aviva Musicus, doctoral candidate, has won this year’s Chiquita Banana Sticker Design Contest for a fruit sticker that she designed. Her award-winning design will appear on Chiquita bananas in grocery stores across the US in the coming year. Aviva also won their last sticker design contest back in 2010.

Dr Walter Willett, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, delivered the Rundle-Lister Lectureship in Transformative Nutritional Medical Education at the Food as Medicine 2019 Update: Hot Topics in Nutrition Through the Lifespan at the University of Toronto titled ‘Diet and Health Across the Lifespan’, on November 15th.

He also delivered the Opening Keynote speech at the ‘Future Food: Health and Sustainability’ at the Royal Society in London titled ‘The Role of Plant-Centric Dietary Patterns: The Potential for a Double Win’ on December 12th. He enjoyed getting his picture taken with the portrait of the first President of the Royal Society, Isaac Newton.
**NEW PUBLICATIONS**

**Dr Erica Kenney**, Assistant Professor of Public Health Nutrition, published a cost-effectiveness analysis of expanding school drinking water access nationwide for obesity prevention. This paper is important because improving drinking water access in schools can lead to small population-wide reductions in BMI z-score among students, due to water consumption replacing sugary drink consumption. Her team conducted a cost-effectiveness analysis to understand whether working to improve drinking water access and increase intake in schools would be a worthwhile investment as an obesity prevention strategy for public health. The researchers found that installing easy-to-use water dispensers directly in school cafeteria lunch lines, which makes drinking water more accessible as a beverage choices during lunch, could prevent nearly 180,000 cases of obesity at the end of ten years of implementation (from 2015-2025) and save about 30 cents in healthcare costs per dollar invested for implementation. While this by no means would "solve" the obesity epidemic, it is relatively cost-effective.


**Dr Ming Ding**, a research associate in the department, published a paper in BMJ that comprehensively examined the association of consumption of dairy foods with risk of total and cause-specific mortality among 168,153 women and 49,602 men without cardiovascular disease or cancer at baseline from the Nurses’ Health Study, Nurses’ Health Study II, and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study. The results did not support an inverse association between high amount of dairy consumption and risk of mortality. A dose-response analysis suggested that two servings per day of dairy products could depend on the comparison foods used to replace dairy: replacing dairy with nuts or legumes, poultry, and whole grains was associated with lower mortality. However, replacing total dairy with red and processed meat was associated with increased mortality.

**DISSERTATION DEFENSES**

SD candidate *Martha Tamez* successfully defended her dissertation titled “A Traditional Mexican Diet Score, Diet Quality Scores, and Risk of Hypertension Among US Adults of Mexican Heritage” on December 2, 2019.

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**DR MIRIAM NELSON DELIVERS THIS YEAR’S STARE-HEGSTED LECTURE**

The Department of Nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health held its 15th Annual Stare-Hegsted Lecture in honor of *Drs Fredrick Stare* and *Mark Hegsted*, who in 1942 founded the Department, the first nutrition department in the US. *Miriam Nelson, PhD*, delivered this year’s Lecture on “Dietary Guidelines and Sustainability: Politics, Policies, and Practice”.

Dr Nelson is a professor emerita at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. In addition to her academic leadership and scholarship, Dr. Nelson has contributed broadly to public policy initiatives. In 2008, she served as the vice-chair of the Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She also served on the 2010 and 2015 respective Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committees (DGAC) for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Within the 2015 DGAC, Dr. Nelson spearheaded the influential work on dietary guidance and sustainability. At the University of New Hampshire, Dr. Nelson led the initiative that resulted in the institution becoming the third university in the country to be awarded platinum status from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

In her lecture Dr. Nelson talked about the challenges facing our trying to reach sustainable development goals, then after defining sustainability, successively discussed her experiences in serving on 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee and how dietary guidelines have impacted sustainable diets, then updated
current research in this area. She also discussed how sustainability is translated into practice and what other countries are doing about diet and sustainability, and asked where we are now with this area.

The Stare-Hegsted Lecture was well-attended, and left many people with much food for thought afterwards.

To read more: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/eat-greener-sustainability-dietary-guidelines/

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### Nutrition and Global Health Symposium Addresses Ways to Build Better Global Food Systems

According to Rob Bertram of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), boosting agricultural productivity in low- and middle-income countries such as Ethiopia is a proven way to pull families out of poverty and boost rural economies. Bertram, who spoke at the 10th annual Nutrition and Global Health Symposium held November 20th, acknowledged that questions persist around how best to design food systems to provide healthy diets, especially in countries where hunger and childhood stunting exist alongside growing obesity, overweight, and chronic disease.

Bertram also said that although the challenges of malnutrition are global, solutions depend on local contexts. For example, although studies have shown that plant-based diets are better overall for human and planetary health, they may be nutritionally inadequate for pregnant women and children in low-income countries.

Panel discussions afterwards focused on setting research priorities in a global nutrition and health agenda, and on what types of new data are needed, as having access to such comprehensive data could help explain the complex web of pathways that drive food choice in both rural markets and urban grocery stores around.

From: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/building-better-global-food-systems/

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### NUTRITION SOURCE UPDATES

#### Holiday gift guide
Still a few items left on your holiday shopping list? From olive oil to a home-cooked meal, here are 17 creative gift ideas:
https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2015/12/03/healthy-gift-guide-17-ideas-for-giving-the-gift-of-health/

#### Develop a “sugar strategy” for healthy holiday eating
Shared meals are a highlight of the holidays. And while it’s easy to overindulge when there are so many delicious dishes on the table, desserts can be especially easy to overeat:
https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2013/12/20/develop-a-sugar-strategy-for-healthy-holiday-eating/
Food feature: Winter Squash
Along with being uniquely beautiful in a variety of colors and shapes, the firm flesh of winter squash is ideal for soups and other warming dishes:
https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/food-features/winter-squash/

*If you would like to remain current as to what is happening in the field of nutrition, please be sure to view our Nutrition Source website for the latest updates!*
(See: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

We will be holding the Nutrition Department Retreat on 2/12/20 at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center in the Pechet Room. The retreat will be held in two parts. From 8:30 am to 12:30 pm faculty and research scientists will convene to participate in discussion that will lay the foundation for a future strategic plan for the department. We will then break for lunch from 12:30-1:30 pm. After lunch the student and postdoc retreat will start and run until 5 pm followed by a reception.
TEACHING KITCHEN RESEARCH CONFERENCE
www.tkresearchconference.org

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Abstract Submission Period Ends
January 31, 2020
Disposition Notices Sent
March 20, 2020
Housing Reservation Deadline
April 22-23, 2020
Teaching Kitchen Research Day

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Full Details
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SAVE THE DATE
April 22-23, 2020
1440 Multiversity | Scotts Valley, CA

Hosted by: HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH Department of Nutrition
In association with the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative, Inc.
Supported by the National Institutes of Health

Note: All information is subject to change. Please visit the conference website for the most up-to-date information.
SAVE THE DATE!

Confronting the Climate Crisis: Choosing a Healthier Future

April 15, 2020

Symposium
1:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Reception
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Joseph B. Martin Conference Center
77 Avenue Louis Pasteur
Boston, Massachusetts

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and prepare for the next 50 years, please join the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health for a half-day symposium addressing the serious public health effects of the climate crisis and featuring leaders who are driving the movement for a healthier world.

Hosted by the Harvard Chan School’s Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment (Harvard C-CHANGE) and Gina McCarthy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator under President Obama, the event will feature experts who will highlight the health impacts of our changing climate and the ways science and data can motivate action to address this crisis.

Keynote speaker
Christiana Figueres, Former Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Founding Partner, Global Optimism, and Convener, Mission 2020

Please visit the symposium website for more information. To learn about the Harvard Chan School’s work on the climate crisis, please visit Harvard C-CHANGE.
SAVE THE DATE!

Please join the Department of Nutrition on **Monday, January 27, 2020 from 2:00-5:00pm EST** for a symposium exploring red meat, plant-based meat, and lab-grown meat in context of broader challenges for conducting, implementing, and communicating public health research, policy, and guidelines. Additional details available at [hsph.me/jan27](http://hsph.me/jan27).

*Due to limited seating, registration is required. Please RSVP:* [https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Rv5f7be5D0hIYx](https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Rv5f7be5D0hIYx)