Welcome to the second edition of the MCH/Children, Youth and Families Newsletter!

Beginning the New School Year

It does not seem possible that we are beginning another year. The welcoming party is scheduled for September 23, 2012, as usual at my house. Remember alumni are always welcome.

The past year has been a busy one, and this letter presents some of the highlights.

MCH Training Program

The training program remains strong. As I noted last year, the interdepartmental concentration is based in the Department of Society, Human Development and Health participating with Departments of Epidemiology, Global Health and Population, Nutrition (http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/mch-cvf-concentration/index.html). We continue to be supported by two training grants and an endowed fund, the Martha May Eliot Fund. We were very pleased to see that the MCH Epidemiology grant had a competing renewal this year; with the tight budgets, we anticipated that it might be cut. And even better news is that we just received word that our application was accepted. We continue to have strong support from the staff at the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). In an era when existing grants are being cut by 20% or more, our funds this year were cut by a whopping 1.87%!

Nonetheless, there may be storm clouds on the horizon. A delegation from the MCH training programs in schools of public health met with the new associate director of MCHB, Dr. Michael Lu. Michael comes from the UCLA program and was very warm in his support of the training programs like ours. However, he warned that Title V MCH block grant funding is under scrutiny. Since our programs are funded through a 15% set-aside from the block grant, any major decrease in Title V funding will greatly diminish our resources.

As an indication of the attraction of MCH, we had 48 students enrolled in the concentration last year, and many of their biographical sketches are available (http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/mch-cvf-concentration/students/student-biographies/index.html). We graduate about 20 new MCH professionals a year. Our students do amazing things. For example, doctoral theses defended this year include:

- Erin Dunn: The etiology of youth depression: From genes to school social environment
- Alison El Ayadi: Social determinants of pregnancy-related mortality and care seeking for obstetric complications in Bangladesh
• Kate Falb: Gender-based violence among conflict-affected women along the Thai-Burma border
• Josy Hahn: Examining risk factors for intimate partner violence, perpetration and victimization in the general population.
• Heather McCauley: The impact of interpersonal violence on health in the U.S. and Latin America: An Ecological Perspective.
• Nancy Street: A_sleep in the City: Examining the consequences and context of sleep deprivation in urban youth
• Monica Wang: Risk and protective factors of disordered weight control behaviors among youth

In addition, the practical experiences of our masters students covers a wide range of MCH areas:

• As noted last year, we initiated a collaborative effort with Boston Children’s Hospital to provide students with hands on experience in quality improvement activities. This year, students participated in 8 such projects.
• In collaboration with the Department of Public Health, students help develop a Family Leadership Curriculum for parents of children with special health care needs to enhance their ability to participate more fully in the design and evaluation of programs.
• Identifying reproductive health materials in Spanish for low literacy parents using a neighborhood health center
• A project for engaging fathers in the health care of their children and their own health, including a health fair (more complete descriptions at http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/mch-cyf-concentration/students/recent-mchcyf-practicums/index.html)

Since we track their trajectories as part of our training grant reporting, we know that over 70-80% were in leadership positions five years after graduating, and that does not count those who return to the Harvard School of Public Health or other institutions for doctoral degrees.
Community Activities

Ongoing resources for MCH professionals supported by the training grant include:

**MCH/CYF Symposium.** This year, we conducted a symposium in conjunction with the training program in reproductive, perinatal and pediatric epidemiology in the Department of Epidemiology on Jan. 19, 2012. Highlights of this day-long event were an opening talk from Dr. Michelle Williams, the new Chair of Epidemiology, on her work in reproductive epidemiology, a welcoming speech by Dean Julio Frenk on his initiative in Women and Health, and a keynote talk by Dr. Alan Wilcox discussing the theory on fetal programming of metabolism. However, a really exciting part was the presentations by three epidemiology students and three MCH students. The full symposium can be found on-line at [http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/mch-cyf-concentration/mch-symposium/](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/mch-cyf-concentration/mch-symposium/).

**MCH Data Connect.** We continue to support this resource for those seeking data on MCH programs and populations. This year, we did a complete revamp, moving the data set to an HSPH server ([http://web.sph.harvard.edu/mch-data-connect/](http://web.sph.harvard.edu/mch-data-connect/)), and making it much more user-friendly. To remind you, MCH Data Connect is a searchable annotated catalog of MCH data sets and comments on their accessibility for MCH students, investigators and practitioners. We now have over 130 data sets listed, ably maintained by one of our students, Leslie Farland.

**Faculty Activities.** Besides their teaching, the faculty is actively engaged in a variety of technical assistance and consulting activities that indicate their accomplishments in a wide range of areas and provide service to the community.
• Dr. Theresa Betancourt continues to be involved in several local and national activities on child refugee mental health, and children in armed conflict. Her work was featured in Harvard Public Health (http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/magazine/fall-2011/child-soldiers-betancourt.html).
• Dr. Roberta Gottlieb has continued her efforts to embed mental health care in primary care and to foster community-engaged scholarship through visits to medical schools in Ontario and Australia.
• Dr. Marie McCormick is wrapping up an intense experience on the National Vaccine Advisory Committee for which she chaired or co-chaired two working groups, but is keeping busy with participation in the Massachusetts Child Health Quality Coalition and the Oversight Committee for the Program in Perinatal Research and Obstetrics at the National Institute of Health and Human Development.
• Dr. Michael Rich has been active in prevention and research on the effect of the media on children and youth including work with Comcast and Chinese medical schools
• Dr. Rima Rudd is working with colleagues in Maryland, Missouri, as well as in England, Italy, and Spain to increase health literacy activities and research.

In addition, faculty also provide educational experiences for MCH professionals in the community. Our main activity is clearly the symposium. But individual efforts include:

• Case studies in immunization delivery by Dr. Ron Samuels
• Best practices of community engagement: A scientific review of community-level interventions to prevent child abuse and neglect by Dr. Beth Molnar
• Several lectures on community-based participatory research and global MCH by Dr. Roberta Gottlieb
• Many lectures on media safety both locally and elsewhere, especially in schools by Dr. Rich
• Presentations and workshops on obesity prevention and physical activity by Dr. Kristin Davison
• Grand rounds at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Reproductive Health, on conceptualizing the outcomes of very premature infants by Dr. McCormick.
• Workshops and research lectures on mental health, especially among children in vulnerable situations by Dr. Theresa Betancourt.

Needless to mention, the faculty have also been busy publishing both their own work and that with students. This year we have 140 publications, some of which have been posted on our website: http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/mch-cyf-concentration/publications/

**Student Activities.** As noted above, our students also provide significant service through their practica and their research: http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/mch-cyf-concentration/students/recent-mchcyf-practicums/index.html

**Kudos**

Congratulations to our faculty whose work has been recognized:

• Theresa Betancourt was promoted to Associate Professor. Congratulations Theresa!

Congratulations to our students, as well. This past year at the American Public Health Association (APHA) meeting in Washington, we supported two student fellows to the Maternal and Child Section, Olatokunbo Famakinwa (an MD/MPH student) and Alison El Ayadi, a doctoral student.

This coming year four of our students will be presenting at APHA:

• Madeleine deBlois: Childhood self-regulatory skills predict adolescent smoking behavior
• Bernice Garnett: Utilizing latent class analysis to explore the intersectionality of multiple forms of discrimination among ethnically diverse youth: Highlighting racial and weight-based discrimination
• Ashley Winning: Women, career and family: policies and personal experiences in the US and abroad
• Ashley Winning: Perpetual perpetration: the relationship between intimate partner violence and child maltreatment among young adults.
• Elizabeth Janiak: Developing a conceptual model of factors influencing abortion referral behavior.
• Elizabeth Janiak: Translating access into utilization: Lessons from the design and evaluation of an online resource to expand health insurance coverage and promote reproductive health care for young women in Massachusetts.

Other student achievements:
• Alisha Lalani’s abstract “Challenges of an interpregnancy care program in the Mississippi Delta” was accepted for presentation at the 18th Annual Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology (MCH EPI) Conference being held in Texas in December.
• Mariana Arcaya was interviewed on WGBH regarding the recent MBTA fare increase and its effect on health: [http://www.wgbh.org/programs/The-Callie-Crossley-Show-855/episodes/Mon-42312The-MBTA-What-Fare-Hikes--Service-Cuts-Mean-for-Your-Health-38053](http://www.wgbh.org/programs/The-Callie-Crossley-Show-855/episodes/Mon-42312The-MBTA-What-Fare-Hikes--Service-Cuts-Mean-for-Your-Health-38053)
• Mariana Arcaya will receive the Jay S. Drotman Memorial Award given to her on behalf of the APHA.

Alumni

Also, as part of the annual progress report, we contact past students to ascertain what they are doing. We have highlighted four of our graduates to indicate the range of activities of MCH graduates. They are:

• Emily Robyn Van Dyke (MPH, 2008). Emily is of Siksika, Armenian, and Ashkenazi Jewish decent and has a long-standing interest in, and passion for, improving Maternal and Child Health among American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. She studied medicine at the University of Washington in 2004 and her clinical training allowed her to explore her Blackfeet/Blackfoot roots in Browning, MT and in Alberta, and to live – albeit briefly – in Wrangell, AK; Anchorage, AK; Boise, ID; and Billings, MT. She completed her MD at the University of Washington and her MPH at Harvard School of Public Health. Currently, Emily is the project lead and research coordinator for the CINCO Colorectal Cancer, EXPORT Cancer Care Barriers, and NPCC Bioethics Supplement projects. In my spare time, I enjoy dance, basketball, hiking, writing, beadwork, movies and music.
• Karen A. Ertel (ScD, 2008). Karen is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, School of Public Health and Health Sciences. In addition to teaching epidemiology, Dr. Ertel is continuing her research into maternal mental health, developmental origins of childhood overweight, and social disparities in health outcomes among mothers and their children. After completing her doctorate at HSPH, Karen completed a 3-year postdoctoral training program with the Kellogg Health Scholars Program, focusing her work on racial and ethnic disparities among MCH populations. She continues this research at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and is increasingly interested in the intersection of maternal and child sleep, maternal...
mental health, and a range of MCH health outcomes in the perinatal period and early childhood.

- Shalini Tendulkar (ScD, 2008). Since she graduated from HSPH, Shalini has been actively engaged in community-based participatory research. She is currently a Research Associate at the Institute for Community Health (www.icommunityhealth.org), a community based research and evaluation organization in Cambridge, MA and is an Instructor in the Department of Medicine at the Harvard Medical School. She has acquired extensive experience in community based research and evaluation and works with numerous community and academic partners to support their research and evaluation efforts. She is actively leading and participating in several community participatory projects focused on addressing health disparities in immigrant and minority groups. These projects include: 1) a mixed-methods evaluation of the Men's Health League program (http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/lifestyle/mens-health/index.php), based at the Cambridge Public Health Department and a sub-project to understand the father population in Cambridge, 2) a recently funded project to use photovoice methodology to understand Asian youth perspectives on mental health and wellness and 3) work with local safetynet health centers to build their capacity to engage in research and evaluation, through the Harvard CTSI ("Harvard Catalyst") Safetynet Research Infrastructure Initiative. You can read more about Shalini and her work on her organizational website: http://icommunityhealth.org/about-us/staff/shalini-tendulkar-scd/

- Lindsay Giorgi (MS2, 2008). Lindsay is a Health and Wellness Program Manager at Google. After finishing her masters, she became the Operations Specialist at the Google Wellness Center, where she expanded the reach and scope of the on-site clinics; she currently manages 8 clinics in 5 U.S. locations. She is now leading efforts in designing and evaluating Google's global health and wellness initiatives aimed at keeping Googlers and their families healthy and happy. Lindsay is particularly interested in programs, resources, and tools aimed at improving work/life balance, emotional health and overall well-being.

**Ongoing Initiatives**

*Expansion of Evaluation Experience with CDC.* With the leadership of a faculty member, Dr. Mary Jean Brown (http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/faculty/), HSPH students have had the opportunity for an intensive didactic session on program evaluation followed by a two-week field experience in designing an evaluation for a state lead-poisoning prevention programs. This past year, we expanded the program to include the Division of Reproductive Health at CDC largely working with Title V agencies. This coming year, 12 students will be in this experience.

*Funded field experiences.* As noted above, we have expanded the funded field experience with Children’s Hospital, including increased support from Children’s. This coming year, we will be broadening our reach to other faculty and organizations to engage our students in such work.
STRIPED: TransiPed has been renamed.

Dr. Austin has been able to provide doctoral training support for two students this past year. She plans further doctoral support, and new activities. With a supplement to the training, she will be able to provide more translational activities in this new area.

*Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs.* In conjunction with the Director of Family Initiatives at the Department of Public Health, we were successful in applying for a supplement to the training grant to start the first of what we hope will be a series of activities with these families. The first is the development of guides to accurate and useful web pages.

*Joint Webinar with the BU MCH program.* This year, we plan to offer two webinars for the region in conjunction with the BU program. Preliminary plans are to have one webinar on the new school lunch regulations to encourage healthier eating; the second on preventing adolescent pregnancy.

*Collaborations:* We continue to benefit from our affiliations with the MCHB funded training programs on campus: LEAH (Leadership Education in Adolescent Health), LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) and the Behavioral Pediatrics fellowship. In addition, as can be seen from the above, we have strengthened our ties to Children’s Hospital and to the state Department of Health. We also value our programs with the Division of Reproductive Health at the CDC.

Again, we encourage you to visit our web site to see the range of technical assistance activities and research publications. In addition, get to know our current and past students. We would love to hear from our graduates at any time. Finally, our seminar schedule is also posted there, and all are welcome to come. We welcome any suggestions for our seminars or symposia, and any additions to the program.


With warm regards,

Marie McCormick
Director of MCH/CYF